



Everyman, I will go with thec, and be thy guidc,  
In thy most need to go by thy side.

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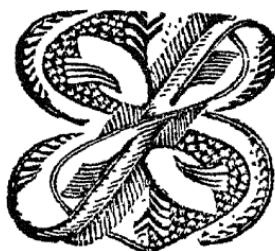
POETRY

POEMS OF OUR TIME: 1900-1942\*

When the world is full of trouble,  
And is restless in its sleep.

W. B. YEATS

POEMS OF OUR TIME  
1900—1942



Chosen by  
Richard Church and M. M. Bozman

LONDON: J. M. DENT & SONS, LTD.

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J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd.  
Aldine House, Bedford St., London  
First published 1945*

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## FOREWORD

THE poems in this book are the voice of the English people during the first half, or almost the first half, of the twentieth century. They are the purest expression of the joys, miseries, love, horror, courage, and despair which have swept over us, as the weather sweeps over our island, during a time when history has been a tale of storm and uprooted institutions. War, revolution, social and moral upheavals, new comforts and new embarrassments, all these experiences have contributed to our growth ; and as they have affected us singly, as identifiable men and women, the more articulate of us have been driven to the antidote of song. And song, like prayer, is a mirror of experience. Wisdom, and the skill of practice, know how to curve that mirror so that what it reflects is concentrated and diminished to an exquisite proportion and set as it were in a frame.

The aim of the anthologist is to continue that wisdom and that skill by redistilling what the poets have already distilled, so that he may present to the reader, or the browser, an intense reduction of daily life ; a poetry of poetry. If, in the present book, this reduction has been rightly done, then here is a concentrated history of our time, an inspired equation of events, upon which the reader may ponder without confusion, or the distraction of fashions, feuds, or the smoke of battle.

Such has been the aim of the anthologists here. We have therefore not been content merely to accept the accidents of chronology and to rank the poets according to their birth-days. That method has no meaning, and is a waste of the significances of the time-spirit. For time is an artist and a critic too. Time loves to make a pattern of the universe and of the fate of men. Why not, therefore, seek time's aid in such a purpose as the undertaking of this book ? The forty years of human affairs over which we range surely mean something in themselves, and have played what might be

called an exterior part, an overall authority, in our comings and goings. Maybe they are the only observer of our human traffic as a whole.

In this belief we have tried to follow that detached observation, and in our two years' task to collect the poems and then leisurely to arrange them so that their own vitality and beauty are enhanced by what they take from and give to each other. In the course of this work we found that the forty years, at least from the æsthetic point of view, roughly divided themselves into four waves, and we have accordingly so divided the book. Each of those waves has an organic unity, moving through an emotional pattern so markedly that it has drawn the whole gamut of events into an almost-meaningful shape. And after the event comes the commentary or song.

It would not be modest to push the matter further. The reader's secondary pleasure, after the instant delight from any one poem, will be to trace his own recognition of a pattern or tendency in the course of the four parts of this book, and to add to the pleasure of the music a satisfaction in the historical basis. The wedding of these two experiences makes for wisdom and a full humanity.

It may be, too, that the poets represented here will benefit by our method. Each of them, instead of having his work lumped at the beginning, the middle, or the end of the collection, is shown as a living and developing creature of the century, an integral part of it, and according to his capacity a voice of it, strengthening his music as the years feed him. Thus the Yeats whom we glimpse at the beginning, in the first period of the book, is a less fully developed poet than the Yeats whom we discover in the last period. Wars, disillusionments, horrible treacheries, have burned away much of the decoration which he had thought was essential to his muse, and his final music remains a superb but sparse enigma. With others of comparable stature, he moves through the book instead of remaining static, and his gait

and gesture—as with all the rest—give the procession a significant variety.

Further, the time-spirit, conjured in this way, becomes already more than latent as a critic of the poets whom it carries in its bosom. We see some of promise discarded, and others coaxed, through suffering and other honours, to an achievement which had not been thought possible. We see some continuous and others sporadic. But whatever the character of each, he adds his quota to the ceremony of time, and is absorbed into the whole, to be enjoyed by the reader not only in his absolute right, but as a contributor to this vast shape which we sense, dimly, to be growing around us; the sculpture which will later be known as *The Twentieth Century*.

RICHARD CHURCH

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I

1900-1914

THE DARKLING THRUSH  
DECEMBER 1900

I leant upon a coppice gate  
 When Frost was spectre-gray,  
 And Winter's dregs made desolate  
 The weakening eye of day.  
 The tangled bine-stems scored the sky  
 Like strings from broken lyres,  
 And all mankind that haunted nigh  
 Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be  
 The Century's corpse outleant,  
 His crypt the cloudy canopy,  
 The wind his death lament.  
 The ancient pulse of germ and birth  
 Was shrunken hard and dry,  
 And every spirit upon earth  
 Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice burst forth among  
 The bleak twigs overhead  
 In a full-hearted evensong  
 Of joy illimitated ;  
 An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,  
 In blast-beruffled plume,  
 Had chosen thus to fling his soul  
 Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carollings  
 Of such ecstatic sound  
 Was written in terrestrial things  
 Afar or nigh around,  
 That I could think there trembled through  
 His happy good-night air  
 Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew  
 And I was unaware.

THOMAS HARDY

## CITIES AND THRONES AND POWERS

Cities and Thrones and Powers,  
 Stand in Time's eye,  
 Almost as long as flowers,  
 Which daily die :  
 But, as new buds put forth  
 To glad new men,  
 Out of the spent and unconsidered Earth  
 The Cities rise again.

This season's Daffodil,  
 She never hears  
 What change, what chance, what chill,  
 Cut down last year's :  
 But with bold countenance,  
 And knowledge small,  
 Esteems her seven days' continuance  
 To be perpetual.

So Time that is o'er-kind  
 To all that be,  
 Ordains us e'en as blind,  
 As bold as she :  
 That in our very death,  
 And burial sure,  
 Shadow to shadow, well persuaded, saith,  
 ' See how our works endure ! '

RUDYARD KIPLING

## AT A LUNAR ECLIPSE

Thy shadow, Earth, from Pole to Central Sea,  
 Now steals along upon the Moon's sleek shine  
 In even monochrome and curving line  
 Of imperturbable serenity.

How shall I link such sun-cast symmetry  
 With the torn troubled form I know as thine,  
 That profile, placid as a brow divine,  
 With continents of moil and misery ?

And can immense Mortality but throw  
 So small a shade, and Heaven's high human scheme  
 Be hemmed within the coasts yon arc implies ?

Is such the stellar gauge of earthly show,  
 Nation at war with nation, brains that teem,  
 Heroes, and women fairer than the skies ?

THOMAS HARDY

#### **ALL THAT'S PAST**

Very old are the woods ;  
 And the buds that break  
 Out of the brier's boughs,  
 When March winds wake,  
 So old with their beauty are—  
 Oh, no man knows  
 Through what wild centuries  
 Roves back the rose.

Very old are the brooks ;  
 And the rills that rise  
 Where snow sleeps cold beneath  
 The azure skies  
 Sing such a history  
 Of come and gone,  
 Their every drop is as wise  
 As Solomon.

Very old are we men ;  
 Our dreams are tales  
 Told in dim Eden  
 By Eve's nightingales ;  
 We wake and whisper awhile,  
 But, the day gone by,  
 Silence and sleep like fields  
 Of amaranth lie.

WALTER DE LA MARE

## ATLANTIS

What poets sang in Atlantis? Who can tell  
The epics of Atlantis or their names?  
The sea hath its own murmurs, and sounds not  
The secrets of its silences beneath,  
And knows not any cadences enfolded  
When the last bubbles of Atlantis broke  
Among the quieting of its heaving floor.

O, years and tides and leagues and all their billows  
Can alter not man's knowledge of men's hearts—  
While trees and rocks and clouds include our being  
We know the epics of Atlantis still :  
A hero gave himself to lesser men,  
Who first misunderstood and murdered him,  
And then misunderstood and worshipped him ;  
A woman was lovely and men fought for her,  
Towns burnt for her, and men put men in bondage,  
But she put lengthier bondage on them all ;  
A wanderer toiled among all the isles  
That fleck this turning star of shifting sea,  
Or lonely purgatories of the mind,  
In longing for his home or his lost love.

Poetry is founded on the hearts of men :  
Though in Nirvana or the Heavenly courts  
The principle of beauty shall persist,  
Its body of poetry, as the body of man,  
Is but a terrene form, a terrene use,  
That swifter being will not loiter with ;  
And when mankind is dead and the world cold,  
Poetry's immortality will pass.

## EGYPT'S MIGHT IS TUMBLED DOWN

Egypt's might is tumbled down,  
 Down a-down the deeps of thought ;  
 Greece is fallen and Troy town,  
 Glorious Rome hath lost her crown,  
 Venice' pride is nought.

But the dreams their children dreamed,  
 Fleeting, unsubstantial, vain,  
 Shadowy as the shadows seemed,  
 Airy nothing, as they deemed,  
 These remain.

MARY E. COLERIDGE

## A FAERY SONG

We who are old, old and gay,  
 O so old !  
 Thousands of years, thousands of years,  
 If all were told :

Give to these children, new from the world,  
 Silence and love ;  
 And the long dew-dropping hours of the night,  
 And the stars above :

Give to these children, new from the world,  
 Rest far from men.  
 Is anything better, anything better ?  
 Tell us it then :

Us who are old, old and gay,  
 O so old !  
 Thousands of years, thousands of years,  
 If all were told.

W. B. YEATS

## ARABIA

Far are the shades of Arabia,  
 Where the Princes ride at noon,  
 'Mid the verdurous vales and thickets,  
 Under the ghost of the moon ;  
 And so dark is that vaulted purple,  
 Flowers in the forest rise  
 And toss into blossom 'gainst the phantom stars  
 Pale in the noonday skies.

Sweet is the music of Arabia  
 In my heart, when out of dreams  
 I still in the thin clear mirk of dawn  
 Descry her gliding streams ;  
 Hear her strange lutes on the green banks  
 Ring loud with the grief and delight  
 Of the dim-silked, dark-haired Musicians  
 In the brooding silence of night.

They haunt me—her lutes and her forests ;  
 No beauty on earth I see  
 But shadowed with that dream recalls  
 Her loveliness to me :  
 Still eyes look coldly upon me,  
 Cold voices whisper and say—  
 ' He is crazed with the spell of Arabia,  
 They have stolen his wits away.'

WALTER DE LA MARE

## THE TWO TREES

Beloved, gaze in thine own heart,  
 The holy tree is growing there ;  
 From joy the holy branches start,  
 And all the trembling flowers they bear.  
 The changing colours of its fruit

Have dowered the stars with merry light ;  
The surely of its hidden root  
Has planted quiet in the night ;  
The shaking of its leafy head  
Has given the waves their melody,  
And made my lips and music wed,  
Murmuring a wizard song for thee.  
There, through bewildered branches, go  
Winged Loves borne on in gentle strife,  
Tossing and tossing to and fro  
The flaming circle of our life.  
When looking on their shaken hair,  
And dreaming how they dance and dart,  
Thine eyes grow full of tender care :  
Beloved, gaze in thine own heart.

Gaze no more in the bitter glass  
The demons, with their subtle guile,  
Lift up before us when they pass,  
Or only gaze a little while ;  
For there a fatal image grows,  
With broken boughs, and blackened leaves,  
And roots half hidden under snows  
Driven by a storm that ever grieves.  
For all things turn to barrenness  
In the dim glass the demons hold,  
The glass of outer weariness,  
Made when God slept in times of old.  
There, through the broken branches, go  
The ravens of unresting thought ;  
Peering and flying to and fro  
To see men's souls bartered and bought.  
When they are heard upon the wind,  
And when they shake their wings ; alas !  
Thy tender eyes grow all unkind :  
Gaze no more in the bitter glass.

W. B. YEATS

## THE STREAM'S SONG

Make way, make way,  
You thwarting stones ;  
Room for my play,  
Serious ones.

Do you fear,  
O rocks and boulders,  
To feel my laughter  
On your grave shoulders ?

Do you not know  
My joy at length  
Will all wear out  
Your solemn strength ?

You will not for ever  
Cumber my play ;  
With joy and a song  
I clear my way.

Your faith of rock  
Shall yield to me,  
And be carried away  
By the song of my glee.

Crumble, crumble,  
Voiceless things ;  
No faith can last  
That never sings.

For the last hour  
To joy belongs ;  
The steadfast perish  
But not the songs

Yet for a while  
Thwart me, O boulders ;  
I need for laughter  
Your serious shoulders.

And when my singing  
Has razed you quite,  
I shall have lost  
Half my delight.

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

#### EAGER SPRING

Whirl, snow, on the blackbird's chatter ;  
You will not hinder his song to come.  
East wind, Sleepless, you cannot scatter  
Quince-bud, almond-bud,  
Little grape-hyacinth's  
Clustering brood,  
Nor unfurl the tips of the plum.  
No half-born stalk of a lily stops ;  
There is sap in the storm-torn bush ;  
And, ruffled by gusts in a snow-blurred copse,  
' Pity to wait ' sings a thrush.

Love, there are few Springs left for us ;  
They go, and the count of them as they go  
Makes surer the count that is left for us.  
More than the East wind, more than the snow,  
I would put back these hours that bring  
Buds and bees and are lost ;  
I would hold the night and the frost,  
To save for us one more Spring.

GORDON BOTTOMLEY

## CLOUDS

Down the blue night the unending columns press  
 In noiseless tumult, break and wave and flow,  
 Now tread the far South, or lift rounds of snow  
 Up to the white moon's hidden loveliness.  
 Some pause in their grave wandering, comradeless,  
 And turn with profound gesture vague and slow,  
 As who would pray good for the world, but know  
 Their benediction empty as they bless.

They say that the Dead die not, but remain  
 Near to the rich heirs of their grief and mirth.  
 I think they ride the calm mid-heaven, as these,  
 In wise majestic melancholy train,  
 And watch the moon, and the still-raging seas,  
 And men, coming and going on the earth.

RUPERT BROOKE

## LOVE LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

We shall live, maybe, till our world turns grey,  
 And peace comes on us as our powers grow less,  
 And scarce we shall distinguish happiness  
 From the opprobrious process of decay :  
 Yet, 'mid the droop and pathos of that day,  
 'Mid songs that cease and wings that acquiesce,  
 The fading skies shall one last fire confess,  
 And love in a great sunset burn away.

Or else, perhaps, because we loved so well,  
 And found love apt to life, the end will prove  
 A consummation rather than a change ;  
 And, tired in the twilight, we shall spell  
 Familiar meanings from the text of love,  
 And only find the words a little strange.

GERALD GOULD

## THE GREETING

*What fettle, mate?* to me he said  
 As he went by  
 With lifted head  
 And laughing eye,  
 Where, black against the dawning red,  
 The pit-heaps cut the sky—  
*What fettle, mate?*

*What fettle, mate?* to him I said  
 As he went by  
 With shrouded head  
 And darkened eye,  
 Borne homeward by his marrows, dead  
 Beneath the noonday sky—  
*What fettle, mate?*

WILFRID GIBSON

## THE NIGHT IS FREEZING FAST

The night is freezing fast,  
 To-morrow comes December ;  
 And winterfalls of old  
 Are with me from the past ;  
 And chiefly I remember  
 How Dick would hate the cold.

Fall, winter, fall ; for he,  
 Prompt hand and headpiece clever,  
 Has woven a winter robe,  
 And made of earth and sea  
 His overcoat for ever,  
 And wears the turning globe.

A. E. HOUSMAN

## EIGHT O'CLOCK

He stood, and heard the steeple  
 Sprinkle the quarters on the morning town.  
 One, two, three, four, to market-place and people  
 It tossed them down.

Strapped, noosed, nighing his hour,  
 He stood and counted them and cursed his luck ;  
 And then the clock collected in the tower  
 Its strength, and struck.

A. E. HOUSMAN

## DRUMMER HODGE

They throw in Drummer Hodge, to rest  
 Uncoffined—just as found :  
 His landmark is a kopje-crest  
 That breaks the veldt around :  
 And foreign constellations west  
 Each night above his mound.

Young Hodge the Drummer never knew—  
 Fresh from his Wessex home—  
 The meaning of the broad Karoo,  
 The Bush, the dusty loam,  
 And why uprose to nightly view  
 Strange stars amid the gloam.

Yet portion of that unknown plain  
 Will Hodge forever be ;  
 His homely Northern breast and brain  
 Grow to some Southern tree,  
 And strange-eyed constellations reign  
 His stars eternally.

THOMAS HARDY

## SONG

Lean out of the window,  
 Goldenhair,  
 I hear you singing  
 A merry air.

My book is closed;  
 I read no more,  
 Watching the fire dance  
 On the floor.

I have left my book:  
 I have left my room:  
 For I heard you singing  
 Through the gloom,

Singing and singing  
 A merry air.

Lean out of the window,  
 Goldenhair,

JAMES JOYCE

## THE GYPSY GIRL

' Come, try your skill, kind gentlemen,  
   A penny for three tries ! '  
 Some threw and lost, some threw and won  
   A ten-a-penny prize.

She was a tawny gypsy girl,  
   A girl of twenty years,  
 I liked her for the lumps of gold  
   That jingled from her ears;

I liked the flaring yellow scarf  
   Bound loose about her throat,  
 I liked her showy purple gown  
   And flashy velvet coat.

A man came up, too loose of tongue,  
And said no good to her ;  
She did not blush as Saxons do,  
Or turn upon the cur ;

She fawned and whined ‘ Sweet gentleman,  
A penny for three tries ! ’  
—But oh, the den of wild things in  
The darkness of her eyes !

RALPH HODGSON

## A WOMAN IS A BRANCHY TREE

A woman is a branchy tree  
And man a singing wind ;  
And from her branches carelessly  
He takes what he can find :

Then wind and man go far away,  
While winter comes with loneliness ;  
With cold, and rain, and slow decay,  
On woman and on tree, till they

Droop to the earth again, and be  
A withered woman, a withered tree ;  
While wind and man woo in the glade  
Another tree, another maid.

JAMES STEPHENS

## DOWN BY THE SALLEY GARDENS

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet ;  
 She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet.  
 She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree ;  
 But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,  
 And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand.  
 She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs ;  
 But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

W. B. YEATS

## A BUD IN THE FROST

Blow on the embers, an' sigh at the sparkles !  
 My mother she bid me be wise in time.—  
 Ashes are white an' the red fire darkles ;  
 I lost the words, but I know the rhyme.

It may be true,  
 An' it may be true.  
 'Tis much to me, 'tis little to you !  
 Oh, look if a boat comes over the water,  
 An' call on my mother who told her daughter  
 That ' Love is all crost,—like a bud in the frost.'

Love has undone me, an' why would you wonder !  
 My mother she bid me be wise in time.—  
 The waters have met, an' my head has gone under,  
 But far, far away there are bells that chime  
 How love is no liar,  
 Oh, love is no liar.  
 ' That's only a bird singin' there on the briar.  
 You'd better be lookin' no more at the water,  
 But give me your hand an' come home, my daughter,  
 For love is all crost,—like a bud in the frost.'

MOIRA O'NEILL

## TAM I' THE KIRK

O Jean, my Jean, when the bell ca's the congregation  
Owre valley an' hill wi' the ding frae its iron mou',  
When a'body's thochts is set on his ain salvation,  
Mine's set on you.

There's a reid rose lies on the Buik o' the Word 'afore ye  
That was growin' braw on its bush at the keek o' day,  
But the lad that pu'd yon flower i' the mornin's glory,  
He canna pray.

He canna pray ; but there's nane i' the Kirk will heed him  
Whaur he sits sae still his lane at the side o' the wa',  
For nane but the reid rose kens what my lassie gie'd him,  
It an' us twa !

He canna sing for the sang that his ain he'rt raises,  
He canna see for the mist that's afore his een,  
And a voice drouns the hale o' the psalms an' the paraphrases,  
Cryin' ' Jean, Jean, Jean ! '

VIOLET JACOB

## THE HEART OF THE WOMAN

O what to me the little room  
That was brimmed up with prayer and rest ;  
He bade me out into the gloom,  
And my breast lies upon his breast.

O what to me my mother's care,  
The house where I was safe and warm ;  
The shadowy blossom of my hair  
Shall hide us from the bitter storm.

O hiding hair and dewy eyes,  
I am no more with life and death,  
My heart upon his warm heart lies,  
My breath is mixed into his breath.

W. B. SEATON

## HARP SONG OF THE DANE WOMEN

What is a woman that you forsake her,  
 And the hearth-fire and the home-acre,  
 To go with the old grey Widow-maker ?

She has no house to lay a guest in—  
 But one chill bed for all to rest in,  
 That the pale suns and the stray bergs nest in.

She has no strong white arms to fold you,  
 But the ten-times-fingering weed to hold you—  
 Out on the rocks where the tide has rolled you.

Yet, when the signs of summer thicken,  
 And the ice breaks, and the birch-buds quicken  
 Yearly you turn from our side, and sicken—

Sicken again for the shouts and the slaughters.  
 You steal away to the lapping waters,  
 And look at your ship in her winter-quarters.

You forget our mirth, and talk at the tables,  
 The kine in the shed and the horse in the stables—  
 To pitch her sides and go over her cables.

Then you drive out where the storm-clouds swallow,  
 And the sound of your oar-blades, falling hollow,  
 Is all we have left through the months to follow.

Ah, what is Woman that you forsake her,  
 And the hearth-fire and the home-acre,  
 To go with the old grey Widow-maker ?

## ARAB LOVE-SONG

The hunched camels of the night  
Trouble the bright  
And silver waters of the moon.  
The Maiden of the Morn will soon  
Through Heaven stray and sing,  
Star gathering.

Now while the dark about our loves is strewn,  
Light of my dark, blood of my heart, O come !  
And night will catch her breath up, and be dumb.

Leave thy father, leave thy mother  
And thy brother ;  
Leave the black tents of thy tribe apart !  
Am I not thy father and thy brother,  
And thy mother ?  
And thou—what needest with thy tribe's black tents  
Who hast the red pavilion of my heart ?

FRANCIS THOMPSON

## THE COOLIN

Come with me, under my coat,  
And we will drink our fill  
Of the milk of the white goat,  
Or wine if it be thy will.

And we will talk, until  
Talk is a trouble, too,  
Out on the side of the hill :  
And nothing is left to do,

But an eye to look in an eye ;  
And a hand in a hand to slip ;  
And a sigh to answer a sigh ;  
And a lip to find out a lip !

What if the night be black !  
Or the air of the mountain chill !

Where the goat lies down in her track,  
And all but the fern is still !

Stay with me, under my coat !  
And we will drink our fill  
Of the milk of the white goat,  
Out on the side of the hill !

JAMES STEPHENS

NOCTURN

I walk, I only,  
Not I only wake ;  
Nothing is, this sweet night,  
But doth couch and wake  
For its love's sake ;  
Everything, this sweet night,  
Couches with its mate.  
For whom but for the stealthy-visitant sun  
Is the naked moon  
Tremulous and elate ?  
The heaven hath the earth  
Its own and all apart ;  
The hushed pool holdeth  
A star to its heart.  
You may think the rose sleepeth,  
But though she folded is,  
The wind doubts her sleeping ;  
Not all the rose sleeps,  
But smiles in her sweet heart  
For crafty bliss.  
The wind lieth with the rose,  
And when he stirs, she stirs in her repose :  
The wind hath the rose,  
And the rose her kiss.  
Ah, mouth of me !  
Is it then that this  
Seemeth much to thee ?—  
I wander only.  
The rose hath her kiss.

FRANCIS THOMPSON

REFUGE

Twilight, a timid fawn, went glimmering by,  
And Night, the dark-blue hunter, followed fast,  
Ceaseless pursuit and flight were in the sky,  
But the long chase had ceased for us at last.

We watched together while the driven fawn  
Hid in the golden thicket of the day.  
We, from whose hearts pursuit and flight were gone,  
Knew on the hunter's breast her refuge lay.

OUTCAST

Sometimes when alone  
At the dark close of day,  
Men meet an outlawed majesty  
And hurry away.

They come to the lighted house ;  
They talk to their dear ;  
They crucify the mystery  
With words of good cheer.

When love and life are over,  
And flight's at an end,  
On the outcast majesty  
They lean as a friend.

## THE OLD WOMAN

As a white candle  
 In a holy place,  
 So is the beauty  
 Of an aged face.

As the spent radiance  
 Of the winter sun,  
 So is a woman  
 With her travail done,

Her brood gone from her,  
 And her thoughts as still  
 As the waters  
 Under a ruined mill.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL

## BEAUTIFUL LIE THE DEAD

Beautiful lie the dead ;  
 Clear comes each feature ;  
 Satisfied not to be,  
 Strangely contented.

Like ships, the anchor dropped,  
 Furled every sail is ;  
 Mirrored with all their masts  
 In a deep water.

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

## TORMENTED BY THE WORLD

Tormented by the world, the wise man said :  
 A rock stands in the sea,  
 And white the anger of water ceaselessly  
 Thunders upon that stubborn head.  
 And I heard the noise of the water say  
 ‘ Not now, not now, but soon enough, ay, soon  
 Thou shalt be worn away.’  
 And I perceived the soul within the stone,  
 And that it answered the corroding tide :  
 ‘ Do all thou canst : have me in thy power :  
 Destroy this body while it is thy hour.  
 Shall I be injured, I undignified,  
 Who am my soul, and in my soul  
 Am God ? ’—Wherewith the whole  
 Insult of the storming sea  
 In one confounding cataract replied,  
 ‘ What else, thou fool, thinkest thou I may be ? ’

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

## THE VIGIL

How long, dear Sleeper, must I wait,  
 Watching this calm deny thy death,  
 Ere thou returnest still elate,  
 Like victor, crowned with parsley wreath,  
 From some Elysian haven green ?—  
 Ere 'neath slow-lifting lids are seen  
 Thy dreamful eyes, which yet behold  
 Those friends of an heroic mould,  
 Who pledge thee there, in Hippocrene ?

‘ Pledge thee ? . . . and prize ! Then nevermore  
 Will they release thee from their home !  
 And thou, on that rare-fruited shore,  
 Must needs forget earth's honey comb,  
 And the joys checkered with distress,

Of friends who did not love thee less,  
 Yet lack the port of those who dance  
 On wave-smoothed sands, as in a trance  
 Buoyant with everlastingness !

Ah, no ! this is my dream, not thine ;  
 Void of the soul that shaped it well,  
 Thy beauty lies, a fragile shell !  
 It is the past that was divine,  
 And nursed thy form and spirit fine !  
 All perishes ! those days are fled,  
 And Memory's art cannot restore  
 Her fading pictures of the dead,  
 That come, come faintlier, come no more !

THOMAS STURGE MOORE

#### BIRTHRIGHT

Lord Rameses of Egypt sighed  
 Because a summer evening passed ;  
 And little Ariadne cried  
 That summer fancy fell at last  
 To dust ; and young Verona died  
 When beauty's hour was overcast.

Theirs was the bitterness we know  
 Because the clouds of hawthorn keep  
 So short a state, and kisses go  
 To tombs unfathomably deep,  
 While Rameses and Romeo  
 And little Ariadne sleep.

JOHN DRINKWATER

AN EPITAPH

Here lies a most beautiful lady,  
Light of step and heart was she ;  
I think she was the most beautiful lady  
That ever was in the West Country.  
But beauty vanishes ; beauty passes ;  
However rare—rare it be ;  
And when I crumble, who will remember  
This lady of the West Country ?

WALTER DE LA MARE

A DREAM OF DEATH

I dreamed that one had died in a strange place  
Near no accustomed hand ;  
And they had nailed the boards above her face  
The peasants of that land,  
And, wondering, planted by her solitude  
A cypress and a yew :  
I came, and wrote upon a cross of wood  
Man had no more to do :  
*She was more beautiful than thy first love,*  
*This lady by the trees :*  
And gazed upon the mournful stars above,  
And heard the mournful breeze.

W. B. YEATS

## THE LISTENERS

‘ Is there anybody there ? ’ said the Traveller,  
 Knocking on the moonlit door ;  
 And his horse in the silence champed the grasses  
 Of the forest’s ferny floor :  
 And a bird flew up out of the turret,  
 Above the Traveller’s head :  
 And he smote upon the door again a second time ;  
 ‘ Is there anybody there ? ’ he said.  
 But no one descended to the Traveller ;  
 No head from the leaf-fringed sill  
 Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,  
 Where he stood perplexed and still.  
 But only a host of phantom listeners  
 That dwelt in the lone house then  
 Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight  
 To that voice from the world of men :  
 Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,  
 That goes down to the empty hall,  
 Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken  
 By the lonely Traveller’s call.  
 And he felt in his heart their strangeness,  
 Their stillness answering his cry,  
 While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,  
 ‘ Neath the starred and leafy sky ;  
 For he suddenly smote on the door, even  
 Louder, and lifted his head :—  
 ‘ Tell them I came, and no one answered,  
 That I kept my word ! ’ he said.  
 Never the least stir made the listeners,  
 Though every word he spake  
 Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house  
 From the one man left awake ;  
 Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,  
 And the sound of iron on stone,  
 And how the silence surged softly backward,  
 When the plunging hoofs were gone.

## SONNET XVII

Because my faltering feet may fail to dare  
The first descendant of the steps of Hell,  
Give me the Word in time that triumphs there.  
I too must pass into the misty hollow  
Where all our living laughter stops : and hark !  
The tiny stuffless voices of the dark  
Have called me, called me, till I needs must follow :  
Give me the Word and I'll attempt it well.

Say it's the little winking of an eye  
Which in that issue is uncurtained quite ;  
A little sleep that helps a moment by  
Between the thin dawn and the large daylight.

Ah, tell me more than yet was hoped of men ;  
Swear that's true now, and I'll believe it then.

HILAIRE BELLOC

## THE GHOST

Peace in thy hands,  
Peace in thine eyes,  
Peace on thy brow ;  
Flower of a moment in the eternal hour,  
Peace with me now.

Not a wave breaks,  
Not a bird calls,  
My heart, like a sea,  
Silent after a storm hath died,  
Sleeps within me.

All the night's dews,  
All the world's leaves,  
All winter's snow  
Seem with their quiet to have stilled in life's dream  
All sorrowing now.

WALTER DE LA MARE

## ON A SLEEPING FRIEND

Lady, when your lovely head  
 Droops to sink among the Dead,  
 And the quiet places keep  
 You that so divinely sleep ;  
 Then the dead shall blessed be  
 With a new solemnity.  
 For such Beauty, so descending,  
 Pledges them that Death is ending.  
 Sleep your fill :—but when you wake  
 Dawn shall over Lethe break.

HILAIRE BELLOC

## NIGHT IS FALLEN

Night is fallen, within, without,  
 Come, Love, soon !  
 I am weary of my doubt.  
 The golden fire of the Sun is out,  
 The silver fire of the Moon.

Love shall be  
 A child in me  
 When they are cinders gray,  
 With the earth and with the sea,  
 With the star that shines on thee,  
 And the night and day.

MARY E. COLERIDGE

## A CRADLE SONG

The angels are stooping  
Above your bed ;  
They weary of trooping  
With the whimpering dead.

God's laughing in heaven  
To see you so good ;  
The Shining Seven  
Are gay with His mood.

I kiss you and kiss you,  
My pigeon, my own ;  
Ah, how I shall miss you  
When you have grown.

W. B. YEATS

## NO CHILD

I heard in the night the pigeons  
Stirring within their nest :  
The wild pigeon's stir was tender  
Like a child's hand at the breast.

I cried, ' O, stir no more !  
(My breast was touched with tears),  
O pigeons, make no stir—  
A childless woman hears.'

PADRAIC COLUM

## MATERNITY

One wept whose only child was dead,  
 New-born, ten years ago.  
 'Weep not ; he is in bliss,' they said.  
 She answered, ' Even so.

'Ten years ago was born in pain  
 A child, not now forlorn.  
 But oh, ten years ago, in vain,  
 A mother, a mother was born.'

ALICE MEYNELL

## REST

On me to rest, my bird, my bird :  
 The swaying branches of my heart  
 Are blown by every wind toward  
 The home whereto their wings depart.

Build not your nest, my bird, on me ;  
 I know no peace but ever sway :  
 O lovely bird, be free, be free,  
 On the wild music of the day.

But sometimes when your wings would rest,  
 And winds are laid on quiet eves :  
 Come, I will bear you breast to breast,  
 And lap you close with loving leaves.

## TO C.L.M.

In the dark womb where I began  
My mother's life made me a man.  
Through all the months of human birth  
Her beauty fed my common earth.  
I cannot see, nor breathe, nor stir,  
But through the death of some of her.

Down in the darkness of the grave  
She cannot see the life she gave.  
For all her love, she cannot tell  
Whether I use it ill or well,  
Nor knock at dusty doors to find  
Her beauty dusty in the mind.

If the grave's gates could be undone,  
She would not know her little son,  
I am so grown. If we should meet  
She would pass by me in the street,  
Unless my soul's face let her see  
My sense of what she did for me.

What have I done to keep in mind  
My debt to her and womankind ?  
What woman's happier life repays  
Her for those months of wretched days ?  
For all my mouthless body leeched  
Ere Birth's releasing hell was reached ?

What have I done, or tried, or said  
In thanks to that dear woman dead ?  
Men triumph over women still,  
Men trample women's rights at will,  
And man's lust roves the world untamed.

O grave, keep shut, lest I be shamed.

## JEAN RICHEPIN'S SONG

A poor lad once and a lad so trim,

*Fol de rol de raly O !*

*Fol de rol !*

A poor lad once and a lad so trim

Gave his love to her that loved not him.

And, says she, ' Fetch me to-night, you rogue,'

*Fol de rol de raly O !*

*Fol de rol !*

And, says she, ' Fetch me to-night, you rogue,

Your mother's heart to feed my dog ! '

To his mother's house went that young man,

*Fol de rol de raly O !*

*Fol de rol !*

To his mother's house went that young man,

Killed her, and took the heart, and ran.

And as he was running, look you, he fell,

*Fol de rol de raly O !*

*Fol de rol !*

And as he was running, look you, he fell,

And the heart rolled on the ground as well.

And the lad, as the heart was a-rolling, heard

(*Fol de rol de raly O !*)

*Fol de rol !*)

And the lad, as the heart was a-rolling, heard

That the heart was speaking, and this was the word ;

The heart was a-weeping, and crying so small

(*Fol de rol de raly O !*)

*Fol de rol !*)

The heart was a-weeping, and crying so small,

' *Are you hurt, my child, are you hurt at all ?*'

## THE STOLEN CHILD

Where dips the rocky highland  
Of Sleuth Wood in the lake,  
There lies a leafy island  
Where flapping herons wake  
The drowsy water rats ;  
There we've hid our faery vats,  
Full of berries,  
And the reddest stolen cherries.  
*Come away, O human child !*  
*To the waters and the wild*  
*With a faery, hand in hand,*  
*For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Where the wave of moonlight glosses  
The dim gray sands with light,  
Far off by furthest Rosses  
We foot it all the night,  
Weaving ooden dances,  
Mingling hands and mingling glances  
Till the moon has taken flight ;  
To and fro we leap  
And chase the frothy bubbles,  
While the world is full of troubles  
And is anxious in its sleep.  
*Come away, O human child !*  
*To the waters and the wild*  
*With a faery, hand in hand,*  
*For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Where the wandering water gushes  
From the hills above Glen-Car,  
In pools among the rushes  
That scarce could bathe a star,  
We seek for slumbering trout  
And, whispering in their ears,  
Give them unquiet dreams ;  
Leaning softly out  
From ferns that drop their tears  
Over the young streams.

*Come away, O human child !  
To the waters and the wild  
With a faery, hand in hand,  
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Away with us he's going,  
The solemn-eyed :  
He'll hear no more the lowing  
Of the calves on the warm hillside  
Or the kettle on the hob  
Sing peace into his breast,  
Or see the brown mice bob  
Round and round the oatmeal-chest.  
*For he comes, the human child,  
To the waters and the wild  
With a faery, hand in hand,  
From a world more full of weeping than he can understand.*

W. B. YEATS

#### THE HAPPY CHILD

I saw this day sweet flowers grow thick—  
But not one like the child did pick.

I heard the pack-hounds in green park—  
But no dog like the child heard bark.

I heard this day bird after bird—  
But not one like the child has heard.

A hundred butterflies saw I—  
But not one like the child saw fly.

I saw the horses roll in grass—  
But no horse like the child saw pass.

My world this day has lovely been—  
But not like what the child has seen.

W. H. DAVIES

## PRE-EXISTENCE

I laid me down upon the shore  
And dreamed a little space ;  
I heard the great waves break and roar ;  
The sun was on my face.

My idle hands and fingers brown  
Played with the pebbles grey ;  
The waves came up, the waves went down,  
Most thundering and gay.

The pebbles, they were smooth and round  
And warm upon my hands,  
Like little people I had found  
Sitting among the sands.

The grains of sand so shining-small  
Soft through my fingers ran ;  
The sun shone down upon it all,  
And so my dream began :

How all of this had been before ;  
How ages far away  
I lay on some forgotten shore  
As here I lie to-day.

The waves came shining up the sands,  
As here to-day they shine ;  
And in my pre-pelasgian hands  
The sand was warm and fine.

I have forgotten whence I came,  
Or what my home might be,—  
Or by what strange and savage name  
I called that thundering sea.

I only know the sun shone down  
As still it shines to-day,  
And in my fingers long and brown  
The little pebbles lay.

## THE OLD SHIPS

I have seen old ships sail like swans asleep  
 Beyond the village which men still call Tyre,  
 With leaden age o'er-cargoed, dipping deep  
 For Famagusta and the hidden sun  
 That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire ;  
 And all those ships were certainly so old  
 Who knows how oft with squat and noisy gun,  
 Questing brown slaves or Syrian oranges,  
 The pirate Genoese  
 Hell-raked them till they rolled  
 Blood, water, fruit and corpses up the hold.  
 But now through friendly seas they softly run,  
 Painted the mid-sea blue or shore-sea green,  
 Still patterned with the vine and grapes in gold.

But I have seen,  
 Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn  
 And image-tumbled on a rose-swept bay,  
 A drowsy ship of some yet older day ;  
 And, wonder's breath indrawn,  
 Thought I—who knows—who knows—but in that same  
 (Fished up beyond Ææa, patched up new  
 —Stern painted brighter blue—)  
 That talkative bald-headed seaman came  
 (Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)  
 From Troy's doom-crimson shore,  
 And with great lies about his wooden horse  
 Set the crew laughing, and forgot his course.

It was so old a ship—who knows, who knows ?  
 —And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain  
 To see the mast burst open with a rose,  
 And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

## THE WAY THROUGH THE WOODS

They shut the road through the woods  
Seventy years ago.  
Weather and rain have undone it again,  
And now you would never know  
There was once a road through the woods  
Before they planted the trees.  
It is underneath the coppice and heath,  
And the thin anemones.  
Only the keeper sees  
That, where the ring-dove broods,  
And the badgers roll at ease,  
There was once a road through the woods.

Yet, if you enter the woods  
Of a summer evening late,  
When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed pools  
Where the otter whistles his mate,  
(They fear not men in the woods,  
Because they see so few)  
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,  
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,  
Steadily cantering through  
The misty solitudes,  
As though they perfectly knew  
The old lost road through the woods . . .  
But there is no road through the woods.

RUDYARD KIPLING

## UPON ECKINGTON BRIDGE, RIVER AVON

O pastoral heart of England ! like a psalm  
 Of green days telling with a quiet beat—  
 O wave into the sunset flowing calm !  
 O tired lark descending on the wheat !  
 Lies it all peace beyond that western fold  
 Where now the lingering shepherd sees his star  
 Rise upon Malvern ? Paints an Age of Gold  
 Yon cloud with prophecies of linkèd ease—  
 Lulling this Land, with hills drawn up like knees,  
 To drowse beside her implements of war ?

Man shall outlast his battles. They have swept  
 Avon from Naseby Field to Severn Ham ;  
 And Evesham's dedicated stones have stepp'd  
 Down to the dust with Montfort's oriflamme,  
 Nor the red tear nor the reflected tower  
 Abides ; but yet these eloquent grooves remain,  
 Worn in the sandstone parapet hour by hour  
 By labouring bargemen where they shifted ropes.  
 E'en so shall man turn back from violent hopes  
 To Adam's cheer, and toil with spade again.

Ay, and his mother Nature, to whose lap  
 Like a repentant child at length he hies,  
 Not in the whirlwind or the thunder-clap  
 Proclaims her more tremendous mysteries :  
 But when in winter's grave, bereft of light,  
 With still, small voice divinelier whispering  
 —Lifting the green head of the aconite,  
 Feeding with sap of hope the hazel-shoot—  
 She feels God's finger active at the root,  
 Turns in her sleep, and murmurs of the Spring.

## A SINGER ASLEEP

(ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE, 1837-1909)

In this fair niche above the unslumbering sea,  
That sentrys up and down all night, all day,  
From cove to promontory, from ness to bay,  
The Fates have fitly bidden that he should be  
Pillowed eternally.

—It was as though a garland of red roses  
Had fallen about the hood of some smug nun  
When irresponsibly dropped as from the sun,  
In fulth of numbers freaked with musical closes,  
Upon Victoria's formal middle time  
His leaves of rhythm and rhyme.

O that far morning of a summer day  
When, down a terraced street whose pavements lay  
Glassing the sunshine into my bent eyes,  
I walked and read with a quick glad surprise  
New words, in classic guise,—

The passionate pages of his earlier years,  
Fraught with hot sighs, sad laughters, kisses, tears ;  
Fresh-fluted notes, yet from a minstrel who  
Blew them no naively, but as one who knew  
Full well why thus he blew.

I still can hear the brabble and the roar  
At those thy tunes, O still one, now passed through  
That fitful fire of tongues then entered new !  
Their power is spent like spindrift on this shore ;  
Thine swells yet more and more.

—His singing-mistress verily was no other  
 Than she the Lesbian, she the music-mother  
 Of all the tribe that feel in melodies ;  
 Who leapt, love-anguished, from the Leucadian steep  
 Into the rambling world-encircling deep  
 Which hides her where none sees.

And one can hold in thought that nightly here  
 His phantom may draw down to the water's brim,  
 And hers come up to meet it, as a dim  
 Lone shine upon the heaving hydrosphere,  
 And mariners wonder as they traverse near,  
 Unknowing of her and him.

One dreams him sighing to her spectral form :  
 ‘ O teacher, where lies hid thy burning line ;  
 Where are those songs, O poetess divine  
 Whose very orts are love incarnadine ? ’  
 And her smile back : ‘ Disciple true and warm  
 Sufficient now are thine.’ . . .

So here, beneath the waking constellations,  
 Where the waves peal their everlasting strains,  
 And their dull subterrene reverberations  
 Shake him when storms make mountains of their plains—  
 Him once their peer in sad improvisations,  
 And deft as wind to cleave their frothy manes—  
 I leave him, while the daylight gleam declines  
 Upon the capes and chines.

THOMAS HARDY

## THE SOUTH COUNTRY

When I am living in the Midlands  
That are sodden and unkind,  
I light my lamp in the evening :  
My work is left behind ;  
And the great hills of the South Country  
Come back into my mind.

The great hills of the South Country  
They stand along the sea ;  
And it's there walking in the high woods  
That I could wish to be,  
And the men that were boys when I was a boy  
Walking alone with me.

The men that live in North England  
I saw them for a day :  
Their hearts are set upon the waste fells,  
Their skies are fast and grey ;  
From their castle-walls a man may see  
The mountains far away.

The men that live in West England  
They see the Severn strong,  
A-rolling on rough water brown  
Light aspen leaves along.  
They have the secret of the Rocks,  
And the oldest kind of song.

But the men that live in the South Country  
Are the kindest and most wise,  
They get their laughter from the loud surf,  
And the faith in their happy eyes  
Comes surely from our Sister the Spring  
When over the sea she flies ;  
The violets suddenly bloom at her feet,  
She blesses us with surprise.

I never get between the pines  
 But I smell the Sussex air ;  
 Nor I never come on a belt of sand  
 But my home is there.  
 And along the sky the line of the Downs  
 So noble and so bare.

A lost thing could I never find,  
 Nor a broken thing mend :  
 And I fear I shall be all alone  
 When I get towards the end.  
 Who will there be to comfort me  
 Or who will be my friend ?

I will gather and carefully make my friends  
 Of the men of the Sussex Weald,  
 They watch the stars from silent folds,  
 They stiffly plough the field,  
 By them and the God of the South Country  
 My poor soul shall be healed.

If I ever become a rich man,  
 Or if ever I grow to be old,  
 I will build a house with deep thatch  
 To shelter me from the cold,  
 And there shall the Sussex songs be sung  
 And the story of Sussex told.

I will hold my house in the high wood  
 Within a walk of the sea,  
 And the men that were boys when I was a boy  
 Shall sit and drink with me.

## THE RECALL

I am the land of their fathers.  
In me the virtue stays.  
I will bring back my children,  
After certain days.

Under their feet in the grasses  
My clinging magic runs.  
They shall return as strangers,  
They shall remain as sons.

Over their heads in the branches  
Of their new-bought ancient trees,  
I weave an incantation  
And draw them to my knees.

Scent of smoke in the evening,  
Smell of rain in the night,  
The hours, the days and the seasons,  
Order their souls aright ;

Till I make plain the meaning  
Of all my thousand years—  
Till I fill their hearts with knowledge,  
While I fill their eyes with tears.

RUDYARD KIPLING

## IN ROMNEY MARSH

As I went down to Dymchurch Wall  
 I heard the South sing o'er the land ;  
 I saw the yellow sunlight fall  
 On knolls where Norman churches stand.

And ringing shrilly, taut and lithe,  
 Within the wind a core of sound,  
 The wire from Romney town to Hythe  
 Alone its airy journey wound.

A veil of purple vapour flowed  
 And trailed its fringe along the Straits ;  
 The upper air like sapphire glowed ;  
 And roses filled Heaven's central gates.

Masts in the offing wagged their tops ;  
 The swinging waves pealed on the shore ;  
 The saffron beach, all diamond drops  
 And beads of surge, prolonged the roar.

As I came up from Dymchurch Wall,  
 I saw above the Downs' low crest  
 The crimson brands of sunset fall,  
 Flicker and fade from out the west.

Night sank : like flakes of silver fire  
 The stars in one great shower came down ;  
 Shrill blew the wind ; and shrill the wire  
 Rang out from Hythe to Romney town.

The darkly shining salt sea drops  
 Streamed as the waves clashed on the shore ;  
 The beach, with all its organ stops  
 Pealing again, prolonged the roar.

## IT WAS THE LOVELY MOON

It was the lovely moon—she lifted  
Slowly her white brow among  
Bronze cloud-waves that ebbed and drifted  
Faintly, faintlier afar.  
Calm she looked, yet pale with wonder,  
Sweet in unwonted thoughtfulness,  
Watching the earth that dwindled under  
Faintly, faintlier afar.  
It was the lovely moon that lover-like  
Hovered over the wandering, tired  
Earth, her bosom grey and dove-like,  
Hovering beautiful as a dove . . .  
The lovely moon :—her soft light falling  
Lightly on roof and poplar and pine—  
Tree to tree whispering and calling,  
Wonderful in the silvery shine  
Of the round, lovely, thoughtful moon.

JOHN FREEMAN

## THE EARLY MORNING

The moon on the one hand, the dawn on the other :  
The moon is my sister, the dawn is my brother.  
The moon on my left and the dawn on my right,  
My brother, good morning : my sister, good night.

HILAIRE BELLOC

## DAYS TOO SHORT

When primroses are out in Spring,  
 And small, blue violets come between ;  
 When merry birds sing on boughs green,  
 And rills, as soon as born, must sing ;

When butterflies will make side-leaps,  
 As though escaped from Nature's hand  
 Ere perfect quite ; and bees will stand  
 Upon their heads in fragrant deeps ;

When small clouds are so silvery white  
 Each seems a broken rimmèd moon—  
 When such things are, this world too soon,  
 or me, doth wear the veil of Night.

W. H. DAVIES

## THE MAY-TREE

The May-tree on the hill  
 Stands in the night  
 So fragrant and so still  
 So dusky white,

That, stealing from the wood  
 In that sweet air,  
 You'd think Diana stood  
 Before you there.

If it be so, her bloom  
 Trembles with bliss,  
 She waits across the gloom  
 Her shepherd's kiss.

Touch her. A bird will start  
 From these pure snows,—  
 The dark and fluttering heart  
 Endymion knows.

ALFRED NOYES

## THE CHESTNUT CASTS HIS FLAMBEAUX

The chestnut casts his flambeaux, and the flowers  
 Stream from the hawthorn on the wind away,  
 The doors clap to, the pane is blind with showers.  
 Pass me the can, lad ; there's an end of May.

There's one spoilt spring to scant our mortal lot,  
 One season ruined of our little store.  
 May will be fine next year as like as not :  
 Oh ay, but then we shall be twenty-four.

We for a certainty are not the first  
 Have sat in taverns while the tempest hurled  
 Their hopeful plans to emptiness, and cursed  
 Whatever brute and blackguard made the world.

It is in truth iniquity on high  
 To cheat our sentenced souls of aught they crave,  
 And mar the merriment as you and I  
 Fare on our long fool's-errand to the grave.

Iniquity it is ; but pass the can.  
 My lad, no pair of kings our mothers bore ;  
 Our only portion is the estate of man :  
 We want the moon, but we shall get no more.

If here to-day the cloud of thunder lours,  
 To-morrow it will hie on far behests ;  
 The flesh will grieve on other bones than ours  
 Soon, and the soul will mourn in other breasts.

The troubles of our proud and angry dust  
 Are from eternity, and shall not fail.  
 Bear them we can, and if we can we must.  
 Shoulder the sky, my lad, and drink your ale.

## THE PLOUGHMAN

Under the long fell's stony eaves  
 The ploughman, going up and down,  
 Ridge after ridge man's tide-mark leaves,  
 And turns the hard grey soil to brown.

Striding, he measures out the earth  
 In lines of life, to rain and sun ;  
 And every year that comes to birth  
 Sees him still striding on and on.

The seasons change, and then return ;  
 Yet still, in blind unsparing ways,  
 However I may shrink or yearn,  
 The ploughman measures out my days.

His acre brought forth roots last year ;  
 This year it bears the gleamy grain ;  
 Next Spring shall seedling grass appear :  
 Then roots and corn and grass again.

Five times the young corn's pallid green  
 I have seen spread and change and thrill ;  
 Five times the reapers I have seen  
 Go creeping up the far-off hill :

And, as the unknowing ploughman climbs  
 Slowly and inveterately,  
 I wonder long how many times  
 The corn will spring again for me.

## THE PRAISE OF DUST

‘ What of vile dust ? ’ the preacher said.  
 Methought the whole world woke,  
 The dead stone lived beneath my foot,  
 And my whole body spoke.

‘ You, that play tyrant to the dust,  
 And stamp its wrinkled face,  
 This patient star that flings you not  
 Far into homeless space,

‘ Come down out of your dusty shrine  
 The living dust to see,  
 The flowers that at your sermon’s end  
 Stand blazing silently.

‘ Rich white and blood-red blossom ; stones,  
 Lichens like fire encrust ;  
 A gleam of blue, a glare of gold,  
 The vision of the dust.

‘ Pass them all by : till, as you come  
 Where, at a city’s edge,  
 Under a tree—I know it well—  
 Under a lattice hedge,

‘ The sunshine falls on one brown head.  
 You, too, O cold of clay,  
 Eater of stones, may haply hear  
 The trumpets of that day

‘ When God to all His paladins  
 By His own splendour swore  
 To make a fairer face than heaven,  
 Of dust and nothing more.’

## THE DONKEY

When fishes flew and forests walked  
 And figs grew upon thorn,  
 Some moment when the moon was blood  
 Then surely I was born ;

With monstrous head and sickening cry  
 And ears like errant wings,  
 The devil's walking parody  
 On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,  
 Of ancient, crooked will ;  
 Starve, scourge, deride me : I am dumb,  
 I keep my secret still.

Fools ! For I also had my hour ;  
 One far fierce hour and sweet :  
 There was a shout about my ears,  
 And palms before my feet.

G. K. CHESTERTON

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

*'In no strange land'*

O world invisible, we view thee,  
 O world intangible, we touch thee,  
 O world unknowable, we know thee,  
 Inapprehensible, we clutch thee !

Does the fish soar to find the ocean,  
 The eagle plunge to find the air—  
 That we ask of the stars in motion  
 If they have rumour of thee there ?

Not where the wheeling systems darken,  
 And our benumbed conceiving soars !—  
 The drift of pinions, would we hearken,  
 Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places ;—  
 Turn but a stone, and start a wing !  
 'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,  
 That miss the many-splendoured thing.

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)  
 Cry ;—and upon thy so sore loss  
 Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder  
 Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.

FRANCIS THOMPSON

#### THE WATERSHED

*Lines written between Munich and Verona*

Black mountains pricked with pointed pine  
 A melancholy sky.  
 Out-distanced was the German vine,  
 The sterile fields lay high.  
 From swarthy Alps I travelled forth  
 Aloft ; it was the north, the north ;  
 Bound for the Noon was I.

I seemed to breast the streams that day ;  
 I met, opposed, withstood  
 The northward rivers on their way,  
 My heart against the flood—  
 My heart that pressed to rise and reach,  
 And felt the love of altering speech,  
 Of frontiers, in its blood.

But O the unfolding South ! the burst  
 Of summer ! O to see  
 Of all the southward brooks the first !  
 The travelling heart went free  
 With endless streams ; that strife was stopped ;  
 And down a thousand vales I dropped,  
 I flowed to Italy.

ALICE MEYNELL

## PORT OF HOLY PETER

The blue laguna rocks and quivers,  
 Dull gurgling eddies twist and spin,  
 The climate does for people's livers,  
 It's a nasty place to anchor in  
 Is Spanish port,  
 Fever port,  
 Port of Holy Peter.

The town begins on the sea-beaches,  
 And the town's mad with the stinging flies,  
 The drinking water's mostly leeches,  
 It's a far remove from Paradise  
 Is Spanish port,  
 Fever port,  
 Port of Holy Peter.

There's sand-bagging and throat-slitting,  
 And quiet graves in the sea slime,  
 Stabbing, or course, and rum-hitting,  
 Dirt, and drink, and stink, and crime,  
 In Spanish port,  
 Fever port,  
 Port of Holy Peter.

All the day the wind's blowing  
 From the thick swamp below the hills,  
 All the night the plague's growing,  
 And the dawn brings the fever chills,  
 In Spanish port,  
 Fever port,  
 Port of Holy Peter.

You get a thirst there's no slaking,  
 You get the chills and fever-shakes,  
 Tongue yellow and head aching,  
 And then the sleep that never wakes.  
 And all the year the heat's baking,  
 The sea rots and the earth quakes,  
 In Spanish port,  
 Fever port,  
 Port of Holy Peter.

## SWEET STAY-AT-HOME

Sweet Stay-at-home, sweet Well-content,  
Thou knowest of no strange continent :  
Thou hast not felt thy bosom keep  
A gentle motion with the deep ;  
Thou hast not sailed in Indian seas,  
Where scent comes forth in every breeze.  
Thou hast not seen the rich grape grow  
For miles, as far as eyes can go ;  
Thou hast not seen a summer's night  
When maids could sew by a worm's light ;  
Nor the North Sea in spring send out  
Bright hues that like birds flit about  
In solid cages of white ice—  
Sweet Stay-at-home, sweet Love-one-place.  
Thou hast not seen black fingers pick  
White cotton when the bloom is thick,  
Nor heard black throats in harmony ;  
Nor hast thou sat on stones that lie  
Flat on the earth, that once did rise  
To hide proud kings from common eyes ;  
Thou hast not seen plains full of bloom  
Where green things had such little room  
They pleased the eye like fairer flowers—  
Sweet Stay-at-home, all these long hours.  
Sweet Well-content, sweet Love-one-place,  
Sweet, simple maid, bless thy dear face ;  
For thou hast made more homely stuff  
Nurture thy gentle self enough ;  
I love thee for a heart that's kind—  
Not for the knowledge in thy mind.

W. H. DAVIES

## LEPANTO

White founts falling in the courts of the sun,  
 And the Soldan of Byzantium is smiling as they run ;  
 There is laughter like the fountains in that face of all men  
 feared,

It stirs the forest darkness, the darkness of his beard,  
 It curls the blood-red crescent, the crescent of his lips,  
 For the inmost sea of all the earth is shaken with his ships.  
 They have dared the white republics up the capes of Italy,  
 They have dashed the Adriatic round the Lion of the Sea,  
 And the Pope has cast his arms abroad for agony and loss,  
 And called the kings of Christendom for swords about the  
 Cross,

The cold queen of England is looking in the glass ;  
 The shadow of the Valois is yawning at the Mass ;  
 From evening isles fantastical rings faint the Spanish gun,  
 And the Lord upon the Golden Horn is laughing in the  
 sun.

Dim drums throbbing, in the hills half heard,  
 Where only on a nameless throne a crownless prince has  
 stirred,

Where, risen from a doubtful seat and half-attainted stall,  
 The last knight of Europe takes weapons from the wall,  
 The last and lingering troubadour to whom the bird has  
 sung,

That once went singing southward when all the world was  
 young,

In that enormous silence, tiny and unafraid,  
 Comes up along a winding road the noise of the Crusade.

Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far,

Don John of Austria is going to the war,

Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold

In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold,

Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,

Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, the cannon, and he  
 comes.

Don John laughing in the brave beard curled,

Spurning of his stirrups like the thrones of all the world,

Holding his head up for a flag of all the free.  
Love-light of Spain—hurrah !  
Death-light of Africa !  
Don John of Austria  
Is riding to the sea.

Mahound is in his paradise above the evening star,  
(*Don John of Austria is going to the war.*)  
He moves a mighty turban on the timeless houri's knees,  
His turban that is woven of the sunset and the seas.  
He shakes the peacock gardens as he rises from his ease,  
And he strides among the tree-tops and is taller than the  
trees,  
And his voice through all the garden is a thunder sent to  
bring  
Black Azrael and Ariel and Ammon on the wing.  
Giants and the Genii,  
Multiplex of wing and eye,  
Whose strong obedience broke the sky  
When Solomon was king.

They rush in red and purple from the red clouds of the  
morn,  
From temples where the yellow gods shut up their eyes in  
scorn ;  
They rise in green robes roaring from the green hells of  
the sea  
Where fallen skies and evil hues and eyeless creatures be ;  
On them the sea-valves cluster and the grey sea-forests curl,  
Splashed with a splendid sickness, the sickness of the pearl ;  
They swell in sapphire smoke out of the blue cracks of the  
ground,—  
They gather and they wonder and give worship to Mahound.  
And he saith, ' Break up the mountains where the hermit-  
folk can hide,  
And sift the red and silver sands lest bone of saint abide,  
And chase the Giaours flying night and day, not giving rest,  
For that which was our trouble comes again out of the west.  
We have set the seal of Solomon on all things under sun,  
Of knowledge and of sorrow and endurance of things done,

But a noise is in the mountains, in the mountains, and I know  
 The voice that shook our palaces—four hundred years ago :  
 It is he that saith not “Kismet”; it is he that knows not Fate;  
 It is Richard, it is Raymond, it is Godfrey in the gate !  
 It is he whose loss is laughter when he counts the wager  
 worth,

Put down your feet upon him, that our peace be on the  
 earth.’

For he heard drums groaning and he heard guns jar,  
*(Don John of Austria is going to the war.)*

Sudden and still—hurrah !

Bolt from Iberia !

Don John of Austria

Is gone by Alcalar.

St. Michael’s on his Mountain in the sea-roads of the north,  
*(Don John of Austria is girt and going forth.)*

Where the grey seas glitter and the sharp tides shift  
 And the sea folk labour and the red sails lift.

He shakes his lance of iron and he claps his wings of stone ;  
 The noise is gone through Normandy ; the noise is gone  
 alone ;

The North is full of tangled things and texts and aching eyes,  
 And dead is all the innocence of anger and surprise,  
 And Christian killeth Christian in a narrow dusty room,  
 And Christian dreadeth Christ that hath a newer face of  
 doom,

And Christian hateth Mary that God kissed in Galilee,  
 But Don John of Austria is riding to the sea.

Don John calling through the blast and the eclipse,  
 Crying with the trumpet, with the trumpet of his lips,  
 Trumpet that sayeth ha !

*Domino gloria !*

Don John of Austria

Is shouting to the ships.

King Philip’s in his closet with the Fleece about his neck,  
*(Don John of Austria is armed upon the deck.)*

The walls are hung with velvet that is black and soft as sin,  
 And little dwarfs creep out of it and little dwarfs creep in.  
 He holds a crystal phial that has colours like the moon,

He touches, and it tingles, and he trembles very soon,  
 And his face is as a fungus of a leprous white and grey  
 Like plants in the high houses that are shuttered from the day,  
 And death is in the phial, and the end of noble work,  
 But Don John of Austria has fired upon the Turk.  
 Don John's hunting, and his hounds have bayed—  
 Booms away past Italy the rumour of his raid.  
 Gun upon gun, ha ! ha !  
 Gun upon gun, hurrah !  
 Don John of Austria  
 Has loosed the cannonade.

The Pope was in his chapel before day or battle broke,  
*(Don John of Austria is hidden in the smoke.)*  
 The hidden room in man's house where God sits all the year,  
 The secret window whence the world looks small and very dear.  
 He sees as in a mirror on the monstrous twilight sea  
 The crescent of his cruel ships whose name is mystery ;  
 They fling great shadows foe-wards, making Cross and Castle dark,  
 They veil the plumèd lions on the galleys of St. Mark ;  
 And above the ships are palaces of brown, black-bearded chiefs,  
 And below the ships are prisons, where with multitudinous griefs,  
 Christian captives sick and sunless, all a labouring race repines  
 Like a race in sunken cities, like a nation in the mines.  
 They are lost like slaves that sweat, and in the skies of morning hung  
 The stairways of the tallest gods when tyranny was young.  
 They are countless, voiceless, hopeless as those fallen or fleeing on  
 Before the high King's horses in the granite of Babylon.  
 And many a one grows witless in his quiet room in hell  
 Where a yellow face looks inward through the lattice of his cell,  
 And he finds his God forgotten, and he seeks no more a sign—  
*(But Don John of Austria has burst the battle-line !)*

Don John pounding from the slaughter-painted poop,  
 Purpling all the ocean like a bloody pirate's sloop,  
 Scarlet running over on the silvers and the golds,  
 Breaking of the hatches up and bursting of the holds,  
 Thronging of the thousands up that labour under sea  
 White for bliss and blind for sun and stunned for liberty.

*Vivat Hispania !*

*Domino Gloria !*

Don John of Austria

Has set his people free !

Cervantes on his galley sets the sword back in the sheath,  
*(Don John of Austria rides homeward with a wreath.)*

And he sees across a weary land a straggling road in Spain,  
 Up which a lean and foolish knight forever rides in vain,  
 And he smiles, but not as Sultan's smile, and settles back the  
 blade . . .

*(But Don John of Austria rides home from the Crusade.)*

G. K. CHESTERTON

#### TO-MORROW

Oh yesterday the cutting edge drank thirstily and deep,  
 The upland outlaws ringed us in and herded us as sheep,  
 They drove us from the stricken field and bayed us into keep ;  
 But to-morrow,

By the living God, we'll try the game again !

Oh yesterday our little troupe was ridden through and through,  
 Our swaying, tattered pennons fled, a broken, beaten few,  
 And all a summer afternoon they hunted us and slew ;

But to-morrow,

By the living God, we'll try the game again !

And here upon the turret-top the bale-fire glowers red,  
 The wake-lights burn and drip about our hacked, disfigured  
 dead,

And many a broken heart is here and many a broken head ;

But to-morrow,

By the living God, we'll try the game again !

JOHN MASEFIELD

## DINING-ROOM TEA

When you were there, and you, and you,  
Happiness crowned the night ; I too,  
Laughing and looking, one of all,  
I watched the quivering lamplight fall  
On plate and flowers and pouring tea  
And cup and cloth ; and they and we  
Flung all the dancing moments by  
With jest and glitter. Lip and eye  
Flashed on the glory, shone and cried,  
Improvident, unmemoried ;  
And fitfully and like a flame  
The light of laughter went and came.  
Proud in their careless transience moved  
The changing faces that I loved.

Till suddenly, and otherwhence,  
I looked upon your innocence.  
For lifted clear and still and strange  
From the dark woven flow of change  
Under a vast and starless sky  
I saw the immortal moment lie.  
One instant I, an instant, knew  
As God knows all. And it and you  
I, above Time, oh, blind ! could see  
In witless immortality.  
I saw the marble cup ; the tea,  
Hung on the air, an amber stream ;  
I saw the fire's unglittering gleam,  
The painted flame, the frozen smoke.  
No more the flooding lamplight broke  
On flying eyes and lips and hair ;  
But lay, but slept unbroken there,  
On stiller flesh, and body breathless,  
And lips and laughter stayed and deathless,  
And words on which no silence grew.  
Light was more alive than you.

For suddenly, and otherwhence,  
I looked on your magnificence.

I saw the stillness and the light,  
 And you, august, immortal, white,  
 Holy and strange ; and every glint,  
 Posture and jest and thought and tint  
 Freed from the mask of transiency,  
 Triumphant in eternity,  
 Immote, immortal.

Dazed at length

Human eyes grew, mortal strength  
 Wearied ; and Time began to creep.  
 Change closed about me like a sleep.  
 Light glinted on the eyes I loved.  
 The cup was filled. The bodies moved.  
 The drifting petal came to ground,  
 The laughter chimed its perfect round.  
 The broken syllable was ended.  
 And I, so certain and so friended,  
 How could I cloud, or how distress,  
 The heaven of your unconsciousness ?  
 Or shake at Time's sufficient spell,  
 Stammering of lights unutterable ?  
 The eternal holiness of you,  
 The timeless end, you never knew,  
 The peace that lay, the light that shone.  
 You never knew that I had gone  
 A million years away, and stayed  
 A million years. The laughter played  
 Unbroken round me ; and the jest  
 Flashed on. And we that knew the best  
 Down wonderful hours grew happier yet.  
 I sang at heart, and talked, and eat,  
 And lived from laugh to laugh, I too,  
 When you were there, and you, and you.

## LIGHT HEART

Ears lack no food, for loaded Time  
 Spins taking tales from waifs of crime,  
 And hapless love wins luck for rhyme,—  
 Yet favour and bounty they blossom like flowers,  
 And begetting brings weeping on laughter like showers.  
 With both hands give then,  
 Let Light Heart live then,  
 For time-to-come's a sieve, when  
 Nothing shall through the web pass  
 Save freshness that growtheth, is mown, and regrowtheth  
 like grass.

As bees with honey cram the hive  
 Sweet, loving lads do well to wive ;  
 Where husband's kiss the toddlers thrive ;  
 For favour and bounty they blossom like flowers,  
 And begetting brings weeping on laughter like showers.  
 With both hands give then,  
 Let Light Heart live then,  
 For time-to-come's a sieve, when  
 Nothing shall through the web pass  
 Save freshness that growtheth, is mown, and regrowtheth  
 like grass.

No wall nor rafter cramps the sky ;  
 Though airmen like the swallows fly,  
 The room for thought yet keeps man shy ;  
 While favour and bounty they blossom like flowers,  
 And begetting brings weeping on laughter like showers.  
 With both hands give then,  
 Let Light Heart live then,  
 Since time-to-come's a sieve, when  
 Nothing shall through the web pass  
 Save freshness that growtheth, is mown, and regrowtheth  
 like grass.

## HEAVEN

Fish (fly-replete, in depth of June,  
 Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)  
 Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,  
 Each secret fishy hope or fear.  
 Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond ;  
 But is there anything Beyond ?  
 This life cannot be All, they swear,  
 For how unpleasant, if it were !  
 One may not doubt that, somehow, Good  
 Shall come of Water and of Mud ;  
 And, sure, the reverent eye must see  
 A Purpose in Liquidity.  
 We darkly know, by Faith we cry,  
 The future is not Wholly Dry.  
 Mud unto mud !—Death eddies near—  
 Not here the appointed End, not here !  
 But somewhere, beyond Space and Time,  
 Is wetter water, slimier slime !  
 And there (they trust) there swimmeth One  
 Who swam ere rivers were begun,  
 Immense, of fishy form and mind,  
 Squamous, omnipotent, and kind ;  
 And under that Almighty Fin  
 The littlest fish may enter in.  
 Oh ! never fly conceals a hook,  
 Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,  
 But more than mundane weeds are there,  
 And mud, celestially fair ;  
 Fat caterpillars drift around,  
 And Paradisal grubs are found ;  
 Unfading moths, immortal flies,  
 And the worm that never dies.  
 And in that Heaven of all their wish,  
 There shall be no more land, say fish.

## FLYCATCHERS

Sweet pretty fledglings, perched on the rail arow,  
Expectantly happy, where ye can watch below  
Your parents a-hunting i' the meadow grasses  
All the gay morning to feed you with flies ;

Ye recall me a time sixty summers ago,  
When, a young chubby chap, I sat just so  
With others on a school-form rank'd in a row,  
Not less eager and hungry than you, I trow,  
With intelligences agape and eyes aglow,  
While an authoritative old wise-acre  
Stood over us and from a desk fed us with flies.

Dead flies—such as litter the library south-window,  
That buzzed at the panes until they fell stiff-baked on the sill,  
Or all roll'd up asleep i' the blinds at sunrise,  
Or wafer'd flat in a shrunken folio.

A dry biped he was, nurtured likewise  
On skins and skeletons, stale from top to toe  
With all manner of rubbish and all manner of lies.

ROBERT BRIDGES

## THE EXAMPLE

Here's an example from  
A Butterfly ;  
That on a rough, hard rock  
Happy can lie ;  
Friendless and all alone  
On this unsweetened stone.

Now let my bed be hard,  
No care take I ;  
I'll make my joy like this  
Small Butterfly ;  
Whose happy heart has power  
To make a stone a flower.

W. H. DAVIES

## CHEDDAR PINKS

Mid the squander'd colour  
 idling as I lay  
 Reading the Odyssey  
 in my rock-garden  
 I espied the cluster'd  
 tufts of Cheddar pinks  
 Burgeoning with promise  
 of their scented bloom  
 All the modish motley  
 of their bloom to-be  
 Thrust up in narrow buds  
 on the slender stalks  
 Thronging springing urgent  
 hasting (so I thought)  
 As if they feared to be  
 too late for summer—  
 Like schoolgirls overslept  
 waken'd by the bell  
 Leaping from bed to don  
 their muslin dresses  
 On a May morning.

Then felt I like to one  
 indulging in sin  
 (Whereto Nature is oft  
 a blind accomplice)  
 Because my aged bones  
 so enjoyed the sun  
 There as I lay along  
 idling with my thoughts  
 Reading an old poet  
 while the busy world  
 Toil'd moil'd fuss'd and scurried  
 worried bought and sold  
 Plotted stole and quarrel'd  
 fought and God knows what.  
 I had forgotten Homer  
 dallying with my thoughts

Till I fell to making  
these little verses  
Communing with my flowers  
in my rock-garden  
On a May morning.

ROBERT BRIDGES

## THE TREES

O dreamy, gloomy, friendly Trees,  
I came along your narrow track  
To bring my gifts into your knees  
And gifts did you give back ;  
For when I brought this heart that burns—  
These thoughts that bitterly repine—  
And laid them here among the ferns  
And the hum of boughs divine  
Ye, vastest breathers of the air,  
Shook down with show and mighty poise  
Your coolness on the human care,  
Your wonder on its toys,  
Your greenness on the heart's despair,  
Your darkness on its noise.

HERBERT TRENCH

## THUNDERSTORMS

My mind has thunderstorms,  
That brood for heavy hours :  
Until they rain me words,  
My thoughts are drooping flowers  
And sulking, silent birds.

Yet come, dark thunderstorms,  
And brood your heavy hours ;  
For when you rain me words  
My thoughts are dancing flowers  
And joyful singing birds.

W. H. DAVIES

## THE RAIN

I hear leaves drinking rain ;  
 I hear rich leaves on top  
 Giving the poor beneath  
 Drop after drop ;  
 'Tis a sweet noise to hear  
 These green leaves drinking near.

And when the Sun comes out,  
 After this rain shall stop,  
 A wondrous light will fill  
 Each dark, round drop ;  
 I hope the Sun shines bright ;  
 'Twill be a lovely sight.

W. H. DAVIES

## THE KINGFISHER

It was the rainbow gave thee birth,  
 And left thee all her lovely hues ;  
 And, as her mother's name was Tears,  
 So runs it in thy blood to choose  
 For haunts the lonely pools, and keep  
 In company with trees that weep.

Go you and, with such glorious hues,  
 Live with proud Peacocks in green parks ;  
 On Lawns as smooth as shining glass,  
 Let every feather show its marks ;  
 Get thee on boughs and clap thy wings  
 Before the windows of proud kings.

Nay, lovely Bird, thou art not vain ;  
 Thou hast no proud, ambitious mind ;  
 I also love a quiet place  
 That's green, away from all mankind ;  
 A lonely pool, and let a tree  
 Sigh with her bosom over me.

W. H. DAVIES

## THE SHELL

## I

And then I pressed the shell  
Close to my ear,  
And listened well.

And straightway, like a bell,  
Came low and clear  
The slow, sad murmur of far distant seas  
Whipped by an icy breeze  
Upon a shore  
Wind-swept and desolate.

It was a sunless strand that never bore  
The footprint of a man,  
Nor felt the weight  
Since time began  
Of any human quality or stir,  
Save what the dreary winds and wave incur.

## II

And in the hush of waters was the sound  
Of pebbles, rolling round ;  
For ever rolling, with a hollow sound :

And bubbling sea-weeds, as the waters go,  
Swish to and fro  
Their long cold tentacles of slimy grey :

There was no day ;  
Nor ever came a night  
Setting the stars alight

To wonder at the moon :  
Was twilight only, and the frightened croon,  
Smitten to whimper, of the dreary wind

And waves that journeyed blind . . .  
And then I loosed my ear—Oh, it was sweet  
To hear a cart go jolting down the street.

## SCHOOL'S OUT

Girls scream,  
Boys shout ;  
Dogs bark,  
School's out.

Cats run,  
Horses shy ;  
Into trees  
Birds fly.

Babes wake  
Open-eyed ;  
If they can,  
Tramps hide.

Old man,  
Hobble home ;  
Merry mites,  
Welcome.

W. H. DAVIES

## A ST. HELENA LULLABY

' How far is St. Helena from a little child at play ? '  
 What makes you want to wander there with all the world  
 between ?  
 Oh, Mother, call your son again or else he'll run away.  
*(No one thinks of winter when the grass is green !)*

' How far is St. Helena from a fight in Paris Street ? '  
 I haven't time to answer now—the men are falling fast.  
 The guns begin to thunder, and the drums begin to beat.  
*(If you take the first step, you will take the last !)*

‘ How far is St. Helena from the field of Austerlitz ? ’  
You couldn’t hear me if I told—so loud the cannons roar.  
But not so far for people who are living by their wits.  
(“ *Gay go up* ” means “ *Gay go down* ” the wide world o’er ! )

‘ How far is St. Helena from an Emperor of France ? ’  
I cannot see—I cannot tell—the crowns they dazzle so.  
The Kings sit down to dinner, and the Queens stand up to  
dance.  
(*After open weather you may look for snow !*)

‘ How far is St. Helena from the Capes of Trafalgar ? ’  
A longish way—a longish way—with ten year more to run.  
It’s South across the water underneath a falling star.  
(*What you cannot finish you must leave undone !*)

‘ How far is St. Helena from the Beresina Ice ? ’  
An ill way—a chill way—the ice begins to crack.  
But not so far for gentlemen who never took advice.  
(*When you can’t go forward you must e’en come back !*)

‘ How far is St. Helena from the field of Waterloo ? ’  
A near way—a clear way—the ship will take you soon.  
A pleasant place for gentlemen with little left to do.  
(*Morning never tries you till the afternoon !*)

‘ How far from St. Helena to the Gate of Heaven’s Grace ? ’  
That no one knows—that no one knows—and no one ever  
will.  
But fold your hands across your heart and cover up your face,  
And after all your trapings, child, lie still !

## I LOOK INTO MY GLASS

I look into my glass  
 And view my wasting skin,  
 And say, 'Would God it came to pass  
 My heart had shrunk as thin !'

For then, I, undistrest  
 By hearts grown cold to me,  
 Could lonely wait my endless rest  
 With equanimity.

But Time, to make me grieve,  
 Part steals, lets part abide ;  
 And shakes this fragile frame at eve  
 With throbings of noontide.

THOMAS HARDY

## EPITAPH

Sir, you should notice me : I am the Man :  
 I am Good Fortune : I am satisfied.  
 All I desired, more than I could desire,  
 I have : everything has gone right with me.  
 Life was a hiding-place that played me false ;  
 I croucht ashamed, and still was seen and scorned :  
 But now I am not seen. I was a fool,  
 And now I know what wisdom dare not know :  
 For I know Nothing. I was a slave, and now  
 I have ungoverned freedom, and the wealth  
 That cannot be conceived : for I have Nothing.  
 I lookt for beauty and I longed for rest,  
 And now I have perfection : nay, I 'am  
 Perfection : I am Nothing, I am dead.

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

## AFTERWARDS

When the Present has latched its postern behind my tremulous stay,

And the May month flaps its glad green leaves like wings,  
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the neighbours say,  
‘ He was a man who used to notice such things ? ’

If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid’s soundless blink

The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the shades to alight  
Upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a gazer may think,  
‘ To him this must have been a familiar sight.’

If I pass during some nocturnal blackness, mothy and warm,

When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn,

One may say, ‘ He strove that such innocent creatures should come to no harm,

But he could do little for them ; and now he is gone.’

If, when hearing that I have been stilled at last, they stand at the door,

Watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees,  
Will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more,

‘ He was one who had an eye for such mysteries ? ’

And will any say when my bell of quittance is heard in the gloom,

And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings,  
Till they rise again, as they were a new bell’s boom,

‘ He hears it not now, but used to notice such things ? ’

THOMAS HARDY

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Wales England wed ; so I was bred,  
'twas merry London gave me breath.

I dreamt of love,—and fame : I strove :  
but Ireland taught me love was best.

And Irish eyes, and London cries,  
and streams of Wales, may tell the rest,  
What more than these I asked of Life,  
I am content to have from Death.

ERNEST RHYS

## THE HAMMERS

Noise of hammers once I heard,  
 Many hammers, busy hammers,  
 Beating, shaping, night and day,  
 Shaping, beating dust and clay  
 To a palace ; saw it reared ;  
 Saw the hammers laid away.

And I listened, and I heard  
 Hammers beating, night and day,  
 In the palace newly reared,  
 Beating it to dust and clay :  
 Other hammers, muffled hammers,  
 Silent hammers of decay.

RALPH HODGSON

## THE HILL

Breathless, we flung us on the windy hill,  
 Laughed in the sun, and kissed the lovely grass.  
 You said, ‘ Through glory and ecstasy we pass ;  
 Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds sing still,  
 When we are old, are old . . . ’ ‘ And when we die  
 All’s over that is ours ; and life burns on  
 Through other lovers, other lips,’ said I,  
 ‘ Heart of my heart, our heaven is now, is won ! ’

‘ We are Earth’s best, that learnt her lesson here.  
 Life is our cry. We kept the faith ! ’ we said ;  
 ‘ We shall go down with unreluctant tread  
 Rose-crowned into the darkness ! ’ . . . Proud we were,  
 And laughed, that had such brave true things to say.  
 —And then you suddenly cried, and turned away.

RUPERT BROOKE

## AUTUMN

There is a wind where the rose was ;  
 Cold rain where sweet grass was ;

And clouds like sheep  
 Stream o'er the steep  
 Grey skies where the lark was.

Nought gold where your hair was ;  
 Nought warm where your hand was ;  
 But phantom, forlorn,  
 Beneath the thorn,  
 Your ghost where your face was.

Sad winds where your voice was ;  
 Tears, tears where my heart was ;  
 And ever with me,  
 Child, ever with me,  
 Silence where hope was.

WALTER DE LA MARE

## THE DANCER

The tall dancer dances  
 With slowly-taken breath :  
 In his feet music  
 And on his face death.

His face is a mask,  
 It is so still and white :  
 His withered eyes shut,  
 Unmindful of light.

The old fiddler fiddles  
 The merry *Silver Tip*  
 With softly-beating foot  
 And laughing eye and lip.

And round the dark walls  
 The people sit and stand,  
 Praising the art  
 Of the dancer of the land.

But he dances there  
 As if his kin were dead :  
 Clay in his thoughts,  
 And lightning in his tread !

JOSEPH CAMPBELL

I AM TIRED OF THE WIND

I am tired of the wind—  
 Oh, wind, wind, be quiet . . .  
 I am burdened by the days  
 Of wailing and long riot.  
 The heavy trees are thinned ;  
 The clouds lose their ways . . .  
 There's no rest in my mind.  
 When the wind falls the rain falls ;  
 The air has no more breath.  
 The ceaseless ' Hush ' of rain  
 Is what eternity saith.  
 The hills grown near and tall  
 Let down a misty mane . . .  
 Endlessness weighs on all.

GORDON BOTTOMLEY

I HEAR AN ARMY CHARGING

I hear an army charging upon the land,  
 And the thunder of horses plunging, foam about their  
 knees :  
 Arrogant, in black armour, behind them stand,  
 Disdaining the reins, with fluttering whips, the charioteers.  
 They cry unto the night their battle-name :  
 I moan in sleep when I hear afar their whirling laughter.  
 They cleave the gloom of dreams, a blinding flame,  
 Clanging, clanging upon the heart as upon an anvil.  
 They come shaking in triumph their long, green hair :  
 They come out of the sea and run shouting by the shore.  
 My heart, have you no wisdom thus to despair ?  
 My love, my love, my love, why have you left me alone ?

JAMES JOYCE

II  
1914-1918

## THE TRUMPET

Rise up, rise up,  
And, as the trumpet blowing  
Chases the dreams of men,  
As the dawn glowing  
The stars that left unlit  
The land and water,  
Rise up and scatter  
The dew that covers  
The print of last night's lovers—  
Scatter it, scatter it !

While you are listening  
To the clear horn,  
Forget, men, everything  
On this earth new-born,  
Except that it is lovelier  
Than any mysteries.  
Open your eyes to the air  
That has washed the eyes of the stars  
Through all the dewy night :  
Up with the light  
To the old wars ;  
Arise, arise !

EDWARD THOMAS

## THE NEW HOUSE

Now first, as I shut the door,  
I was alone  
In the new house ; and the wind  
Began to moan.

Old at once was the house,  
And I was old ;  
My ears were teased with the dread  
Of what was foretold,

Nights of storm, days of mist, without end ;  
Sad days when the sun  
Shone in vain : old griefs and griefs  
Not yet begun.

All was foretold me ; naught  
Could I foresee ;  
But I learnt how the wind would sound  
After these things should be.

EDWARD THOMAS

## THE EXILE

I am that Adam who, with Snake for guest,  
Hid anguished eyes upon Eve's piteous breast.  
I am that Adam who, with broken wings,  
Fled from the Seraph's brazen trumpetings.  
Betrayed and fugitive, I still must roam  
A world where sin, and beauty, whisper of Home.

Oh, from wide circuit, shall at length I see  
Pure daybreak lighten again on Eden's tree ?  
Loosed from remorse and hope and love's distress,  
Enrobe me again in my lost nakedness ?  
No more with wordless grief a loved one grieve,  
But to Heaven's nothingness re-welcome Eve ?

WALTER DE LA MARE

## SONNET

O little self, within whose smallness lies  
 All that man was, and is, and will become,  
 Atom unseen that comprehends the skies  
 And tells the tracks by which the planets roam ;  
 That, without moving, knows the joy of wings,  
 The tiger's strength, the eagle's secrecy,  
 And in the hovel can consort with kings,  
 Or clothe a God with his own mystery.  
 O with what darkness do we cloak thy light,  
 What dusty folly gather thee for food,  
 Thou who alone art knowledge and delight,  
 The heavenly bread, the beautiful, the good.  
 O living self, O God, O morning star,  
 Give us thy light, forgive us what we are.

JOHN MASEFIELD

## THE GLORY

The glory of the beauty of the morning,—  
 The cuckoo crying over the untouched dew ;  
 The blackbird that has found it, and the dove  
 That tempts me on to something sweeter than love ;  
 White clouds ranged even and fair as new-mown hay ;  
 The heat, the stir, the sublime vacancy  
 Of sky and meadow and forest and my own heart :—  
 The glory invites me, yet it leaves me scorning  
 All I can ever do, all I can be,  
 Beside the lovely of motion, shape, and hue,  
 The happiness I fancy fit to dwell  
 In beauty's presence. Shall I now this day  
 Begin to seek as far as heaven, as hell,  
 Wisdom or strength to match this beauty, start  
 And tread the pale dust pitted with small dark drops,

In hope to find whatever it is I seek,  
Harkening to short-lived happy-seeming things  
That we know naught of, in the hazel copse ?  
Or must I be content with discontent  
As larks and swallows are perhaps with wings ?  
And shall I ask at the day's end once more  
What beauty is, and what I can have meant  
By happiness ? And shall I let all go,  
Glad, weary, or both ? Or shall I perhaps know  
That I was happy oft, and oft before,  
Awhile forgetting how I am fast pent,  
How dreary-swift, with naught to travel to,  
Is Time ? I cannot bite the day to the core.

EDWARD THOMAS

## IN THE SNOW

Hear how my friend the robin sings !  
That little hunchback in the snow,  
As it comes down as fast as rain.  
The air is cold, the wind doth blow,  
And still his heart can feel no pain.

And I, with heart as light as his,  
And to my ankles deep in snow,  
Hold up a fist as cold as Death's,  
And into it I laugh and blow—  
I laugh and blow my life's warm breath.

W. H. DAVIES

## ROMANCE

When I was but thirteen or so  
     I went into a golden land,  
 Chimborazo, Cotopaxi  
     Took me by the hand.

My father died, my brother too,  
     They passed like fleeting dreams.  
 I stood where Popocatapetl  
     In the sunlight gleams.

I dimly heard the Master's voice  
     And the boys' far-off play,  
 Chimborazo, Cotopaxi  
     Had stolen me away.

I walked in a great golden dream  
     To and fro from school—  
 Shining Popocatapetl  
     The dusty streets did rule.

I walked home with a gold dark boy  
     And never a word I'd say,  
 Chimborazo, Cotopaxi  
     Had taken my speech away :

I gazed entranced upon his face  
     Fairer than any flower—  
 O shining Popocatapetl,  
     It was thy magic hour :

The houses, people, traffic, seemed  
     Thin fading dreams by day,  
 Chimborazo, Cotopaxi  
     They had stolen my soul away !

## ECSTASY

I saw a frieze on whitest marble drawn  
Of boys who sought for shells along the shore,  
Their white feet shedding pallor in the sea,  
The shallow sea, the spring-time sea of green  
That faintly creamed against the cold, smooth pebbles.

The air was thin, their limbs were delicate,  
The wind had graven their small eager hands  
To feel the forests and the dark nights of Asia  
Behind the purple bloom of the horizon,  
Where sails would float and slowly melt away.

Their naked, pure, and grave, unbroken silence  
Filled the soft air as gleaming, limpid water  
Fills a spring sky those days when rain is lying  
In shattered bright-pools on the wind-dried roads,  
And their sweet bodies were wind-purified.

One held a shell unto his shell-like ear  
And there was music carven in his face,  
His eyes half-closed, his lips just breaking open  
To catch the lulling, mazy, coralline roar  
Of numberless caverns filled with singing seas.

And all of them were hearkening as to singing  
Of far-off voices thin and delicate,  
Voices too fine for any mortal mind  
To blow into the whorls of mortal ears—  
And yet those sounds flowed from their grave, sweet faces.

And as I looked I heard that delicate music,  
And I became as grave, as calm, as still  
As those carved boys. I stood upon that shore,  
I felt the cool sea dream around my feet,  
My eyes were staring at the far horizon :

And the wind came and purified my limbs,  
And the stars came and set within my eyes,  
And snowy clouds rested upon my shoulders,  
And the blue sky shimmered deep within me,  
And I sang like a carven pipe of music.

W. J. TURNER

## LA FIGLIA CHE PIANGE

*O quam te memorem virgo . . .*

Stand on the highest pavement of the stair—  
 Lean on a garden urn—  
 Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair—  
 Clasp your flowers to you with a pained surprise—  
 Fling them to the ground and turn  
 With a fugitive resentment in your eyes :  
 But weave, weave the sunlight in your hair.

So I would have had him leave,  
 So I would have had her stand and grieve,  
 So he would have left  
 As the soul leaves the body torn and bruised,  
 As the mind deserts the body it has used.  
 I should find  
 Some way incomparably light and deft,  
 Some way we both should understand,  
 Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand.

She turned away, but with the autumn weather  
 Compelled my imagination many days,  
 Many days and many hours :  
 Her hair over her arms and her arms full of flowers.  
 And I wonder how they should have been together !  
 I should have lost a gesture and a pose.  
 Sometimes these cogitations still amaze  
 The troubled midnight and the noon's repose.

## SOWING

It was a perfect day  
For sowing ; just  
As sweet and dry was the ground  
As tobacco-dust.

I tasted deep the hour  
Between the far  
Owl's chuckling first soft cry  
And the first star.

A long stretched hour it was ;  
Nothing undone  
Remained ; the early seeds  
All safely sown.

And now, hark at the rain,  
Windless and light,  
Half a kiss, half a tear,  
Saying good-night.

EDWARD THOMAS

## THE GREEN ROADS

The green roads that end in the forest  
Are strewn with white goose feathers this June,

Like marks left behind by someone gone to the forest  
To show his track. But he has never come back.

Down each green road a cottage looks at the forest.  
Round one the nettle towers ; two are bathed in flowers.

An old man along the green road to the forest  
Strays from one, from another a child alone.

In the thicket bordering the forest,  
All day long a thrush twiddles his song.

It is old, but the trees are young in the forest :  
All but one like a castle keep, in the middle deep.

That oak saw the ages pass in the forest :  
They were a host, but their memories are lost,

For the tree is dead : all things forget the forest  
Excepting perhaps me, when now I see

The old man, the child, the goose feathers at the edge of  
the forest,  
And hear all day long the thrush repeat his song.

EDWARD THOMAS

#### OCTOBER

The green elm with the one great bough of gold  
Lets leaves into the grass slip, one by one,—  
The short hill grass, the mushrooms small, milk-white,  
Harebell and scabious and tormentil,  
That blackberry and gorse, in dew and sun,  
Bow down to ; and the wind travels too light  
To shake the fallen birch leaves from the fern ;  
The gossamers wander at their own will.  
At heavier steps than birds' the squirrels scold.  
The rich scene has grown fresh again and new  
As Spring and to the touch is not more cool  
Than it is warm to the gaze ; and now I might  
As happy be as earth is beautiful,  
Were I some other or with earth could turn  
In alternation of violet and rose,  
Harebell and snowdrop, at their season due,  
And gorse that has not time not to be gay.  
But if this be not happiness,—who knows ?  
Some day I shall think this a happy day,  
And this mood by the name of melancholy  
Shall not more blackened and obscuréd be.

EDWARD THOMAS

## THE MILL-POND

The sun blazed while the thunder yet  
Added a boom :  
A wagtail flickered bright over  
The mill-pond's gloom :

Less than the cooing in the alder  
Isles of the pool  
Sounded the thunder through that plunge  
Of waters cool.

Scared starlings on the aspen tip  
Past the black mill  
Outchattered the stream and the next roar  
Far on the hill.

As my feet dangling teased the foam  
That slid below,  
A girl came out. ‘Take care !’ she said—  
Ages ago.

She startled me, standing quite close  
Dressed all in white ;  
Ages ago I was angry till  
She passed from sight.

Then the storm burst, and as I crouched  
To shelter, how  
Beautiful and kind, too, she seemed,  
As she does now !

## THE MOON

Thy beauty haunts me heart and soul,  
 Oh thou fair Moon, so close and bright ;  
 Thy beauty makes me like the child  
 That cries aloud to own thy light :  
 The little child that lifts each arm  
 To press thee to her bosom warm.

Though there are birds that sing this night  
 With thy white beams across their throats,  
 Let my deep silence speak for me  
 More than for them their sweetest notes :  
 Who worships thee till music fails  
 Is greater than thy nightingales.

W. H. DAVIES

## A GREAT TIME

Sweet Chance, that led my steps abroad,  
 Beyond the town, where wild flowers grow—  
 A rainbow and a cuckoo, Lord,  
 How rich and great the times are now !  
 Know, all ye sheep  
 And cows, that keep  
 On staring that I stand so long  
 In grass that's wet from heavy rain—  
 A rainbow and a cuckoo's song  
 May never come together again ;  
 May never come  
 This side the tomb.

W. H. DAVIES

## BRIGHT CLOUDS

Bright clouds of may  
Shade half the pond.  
Beyond,  
All but one bay  
Of emerald  
Tall reeds  
Like criss-cross bayonets  
Where a bird once called,  
Lies bright as the sun.  
No one heeds.  
The light wind frets  
And drifts the scum  
Of may-blossom.  
Till the moorhen calls  
Again  
Naught's to be done  
By birds or men.  
Still the may falls.

EDWARD THOMAS

## TALL NETTLES

Tall nettles cover up, as they have done  
These many springs, the rusty harrow, the plough  
Long worn out, and the roller made of stone :  
Only the elm butt tops the nettles now.

This corner of the farmyard I like most :  
As well as any bloom upon a flower  
I like the dust on nettles, never lost  
Except to prove the sweetness of a shower.

EDWARD THOMAS

## IN THE CAVES OF AUVERGNE

He carved the red deer and the bull  
 Upon the smooth cave rock,  
 Returned from war with belly full,  
 And scarred with many a knock,  
 He carved the red deer and the bull  
 Upon the smooth cave rock.

The stars flew by the cave's wide door,  
 The clouds wild trumpets blew,  
 Trees rose in wild dreams from the floor,  
 Flowers with dream faces grew  
 Up to the sky, and softly hung  
 Golden and white and blue.

The woman ground her heap of corn,  
 Her heart a guarded fire ;  
 The wind played in his trembling soul  
 Like a hand upon a lyre,  
 The wind drew faintly on the stone  
 Symbols of his desire :

The red deer of the forests dark,  
 Whose antlers cut the sky,  
 That vanishes into the mirk  
 And like a dream flits by,  
 And by an arrow slain at last  
 Is but the wind's dark body.

The bull that stands in marshy lakes  
 As motionless and still  
 As a dark rock jutting from a plain  
 Without a tree or hill ;  
 The bull that is the sign of life,  
 Its sombre, phallic will.

And from the dead white eyes of them  
 The wind springs up anew,  
 It blows upon the trembling heart,  
 And bull and deer renew  
 Their flitting life in the dim past  
 When that dead Hunter drew.

I sit beside him in the night,  
 And, fingering his red stone,  
 I chase through endless forests dark,  
 Seeking that thing unknown,  
 That which is not red deer or bull,  
 But which by them was shown :

By those stiff shapes in which he drew  
 His soul's exalted cry,  
 When flying down the forest dark  
 He slew and knew not why,  
 When he was filled with song, and strength  
 Flowed to him from the sky.

The wind blows from red deer and bull,  
 The clouds wild trumpets blare,  
 Trees rise in wild dreams from the earth,  
 Flowers with dream faces stare ;  
*O, Hunter, your own shadow stands  
 Within your forest lair !*

W. J. TURNER

#### THE STINGING NETTLE

With seed the sowers scatter  
 The furrows as they go ;  
 Poor lads, 'tis little matter  
 How many sorts they sow,  
 For only one will grow.

The charlock on the fallow  
 Will take the traveller's eyes,  
 And gild the ploughland sallow  
 With flowers before it dies,  
 But twice 'twill not arise.

The stinging nettle only  
 Will still be found to stand :  
 The numberless, the lonely,  
 The thronger of the land,  
 The leaf that hurts the hand.

It thrives, come sun, come showers,  
 Blow east, blow west, it springs ;  
 It peoples towns, and towers  
 Above the courts of Kings,  
 And touch it and it stings.

A. E. HOUSMAN

#### IN SEPTEMBER

Still are the meadowlands, and still  
 Ripens the upland corn,  
 And over the brown gradual hill  
 The moon has dipped a horn.

The voices of the dear unknown  
 With silent hearts now call,  
 My rose of youth is overblown  
 And trembles to the fall.

My song forsakes me like the birds  
 That leave the rain and grey,  
 I hear the music of the words  
 My lute can never say.

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

## PEACE

Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,  
 And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,  
 With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,  
 To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,  
 Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,  
 Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,  
 And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,  
 And all the little emptiness of love !

Oh, we, who have known shame, we have found release there,  
 Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,  
 Naught broken save this body, lost but breath ;  
 Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there  
 But only agony, and that has ending ;  
 And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

RUPERT BROOKE

## EPITAPH ON AN ARMY OF MERCENARIES

These, in the day when heaven was falling,  
 The hour when earth's foundations fled,  
 Followed their mercenary calling  
 And took their wages and are dead.

Their shoulders held the sky suspended ;  
 They stood, and earth's foundations stay ;  
 What God abandoned, these defended,  
 And saved the sum of things for pay.

A. E. HOUSMAN

IN TIME OF 'THE BREAKING OF NATIONS' (1915)

Only a man harrowing clods  
 In a slow silent walk  
 With an old horse that stumbles and nods  
 Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame  
 From the heaps of couch-grass ;  
 Yet this will go onward the same  
 Though Dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight  
 Come whispering by :  
 War's annals will cloud into night  
 Ere their story die.

THOMAS HARDY

FROM 'THE SONG OF THE PLOW'

THE MAN ON THE HILL

Under the sun on the gray hill,  
 At breakfast camped behind the hedge,  
 There ate he, there eats he still  
 Bread and bacon on the knife's edge.  
 Blow the wind chill, be sky of lead,  
 Or let the sun burn e'er the ridge,  
 Or be the cloudy fleeces spread,  
 Or let rain drive, or snow come dry  
 What time the blackthorn flower is shed  
 Like puffs of smoke on the blue sky—  
 There sits he now as he sat then  
 And watches how the year goes by,  
 And sees the world God made for men  
 As little for them as it was  
 In those old days of Cæsar's when

Lord Christ came riding on an ass,  
Borrowed from out some friendly stall,  
Or lifted from the common grass  
And set to this new festival.  
So then to work, with heavy foot,  
To rouse his horses with a call ;  
And slow as they he puts them to't,  
To hale the plow on the stony down  
Thro' marl and flint, thro' stock and root,  
Where the rooks cloud the strip of brown  
And querulous peewits wheel and flock :  
Behold them on the sky-line thrown  
Like giant shapes of riven rock,  
He and his team on the world's rim  
Creeping like the hands of a clock.  
Or in wet meadows splashy and dim  
When winter winds blow shrill and keen,  
See him bank up the warp and swim  
The eddying water over the green ;  
Or follow up the hill the sheep  
To where the kestrels soar and lean,  
And from her form the hare doth leap  
Quick and short, and lightly flies  
Before him up the grassy steep  
Where cloakt and crookt he climbs. His eyes,  
Seeing all things, and seeking none,  
Are very patient and weather-wise.  
The clearest eyesight under the sun  
He has, and holds the ancient way,  
The way his forefathers have gone,  
And deems himself as wise as they.

MAURICE HEWLETT

## INTO BATTLE

1915

The naked earth is warm with Spring,  
 And with green grass and bursting trees  
 Leans to the sun's gaze glorying,  
 And quivers in the sunny breeze :

And Life is Colour and Warmth and Light,  
 And a striving evermore for these ;  
 And he is dead who will not fight ;  
 And who dies fighting has increase.

The fighting man shall from the sun  
 Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth ;  
 Speed with the light-foot winds to run,  
 And with the trees to newer birth ;  
 And find, when fighting shall be done,  
 Great rest, and fullness after dearth.

All the bright company of Heaven  
 Hold him in their high comradeship,  
 The Dog-star, and the Sisters Seven,  
 Orion's Belt and sworded hip.

The woodland trees that stand together,  
 They stand to him each one a friend ;  
 They gently speak in the windy weather ;  
 They guide to valley and ridges' end.

The kestrel hovering by day,  
 And the little owls that call by night,  
 Bid him be swift and keen as they,  
 As keen of ear, as swift of sight.

The blackbird sings to him, 'Brother, brother,  
 If this be the last song you shall sing,  
 Sing well, for you may not sing another ;  
 Brother, sing.'

In dreary, doubtful waiting hours,  
 Before the brazen frenzy starts,  
 The horses show him nobler powers ;—  
 O patient eyes, courageous hearts !

And when the burning moment breaks,  
 And all things else are out of mind,  
 And only Joy of Battle takes  
 Him by the throat, and makes him blind,

Through joy and blindness he shall know,  
 Not caring much to know, that still  
 Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so  
 That it be not the Destined Will.

The thundering line of battle stands,  
 And in the air Death moans and sings ;  
 But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,  
 And Night shall fold him in soft wings.

JULIAN GRENFELL

#### LOST IN FRANCE

##### JO'S REQUIEM

He had the plowman's strength  
 in the grasp of his hand :  
 He could see a crow  
 three miles away,  
 and the trout beneath the stone.  
 He could hear the green oats growing,  
 and the south-west wind making rain.  
 He could hear the wheel upon the hill  
 when it left the level road.  
 He could make a gate, and dig a pit,  
 And plow as straight as stone can fall.  
 And he is dead.

ERNEST RHYS

**JULIAN GRENFELL**

Because of you we will be glad and gay ;  
 Remembering you, we will be brave and strong ;  
 And hail the advent of each dangerous day,  
 And meet the last adventure with a song.  
 And, as you proudly gave your jewelled gift,  
 We'll give our lesser offering with a smile,  
 Nor falter on that path where, all too swift,  
 You led the way and leapt the golden stile.  
 Whether new paths, new heights to climb you find,  
 Or gallop through the unfooted asphodel,  
 We know you know we shall not lag behind,  
 Nor halt to waste a moment on a fear ;  
 And you will speed us onward with a cheer  
 And wave beyond the stars that all is well.

MAURICE BARING

**THE SOLDIER**

If I should die, think only this of me :  
 That there's some corner of a foreign field  
 That is for ever England. There shall be  
 In that rich earth a richer dust concealed ;  
 A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
 Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
 A body of England's, breathing English air,  
 Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
 A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
 Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given ;  
 Her sights and sounds ; dreams happy as her day ;  
 And laughter, learnt of friends ; and gentleness,  
 In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

RUPERT BROOKE

## ROUTE MARCH

All the hills and vales along  
Earth is bursting into song,  
And the singers are the chaps  
Who are going to die perhaps.

O sing, marching men,  
Till the valleys ring again.  
Give your gladness to earth's keeping,  
So be glad, when you are sleeping.

Cast away regret and rue,  
Think what you are marching to.  
Little live, great pass.  
Jesus Christ and Barabbas  
Were found the same day.  
This died, that went his way.

So sing with joyful breath.  
For why, you are going to death.  
Teeming earth will surely store  
All the gladness that you pour.

Earth that never doubts nor fears  
Earth that knows of death, not tears,  
Earth that bore with joyful ease  
Hemlock for Socrates,  
Earth that blossomed and was glad  
'Neath the cross that Christ had  
Shall rejoice and blossom too  
When the bullet reaches you.

Wherfore men, marching  
On the road to death, sing !  
Pour gladness on earth's head,  
So be merry, so be dead.

From the hills and valleys earth  
Shouts back the sound of mirth,  
Tramp of feet and lilt of song  
Ringing all the road along.

All the music of their going,  
 Ringing, swinging, glad song-throwing,  
 Earth will echo still, when foot  
 Lies numb and voice mute.

On marching men, on  
 To the gates of death with song.  
 Sow your gladness for earth's reaping,  
 So you may be glad, though sleeping.  
 Strew your gladness on earth's bed,  
 So be merry, so be dead.

CHARLES SORLEY

#### A MOMENT'S INTERLUDE

One night I wandered alone from my comrades' huts ;  
 The grasshoppers chirped softly  
 In the warm misty evening ;  
 Bracken fronds beckoned from the darkness  
 With exquisite frail green fingers ;  
 The tree-gods muttered affectionately about me  
 And from the distance came the grumble of a kindly train.

I was so happy to be alone,  
 So full of love for the great speechless earth,  
 That I could have laid my cheek in the grasses  
 And caressed with my lips the hard sinewy body  
 Of Earth, the cherishing mistress of bitter lovers.

RICHARD ALDINGTON

## DAWN ON THE SOMME

Last night rain fell over the scarred plateau,  
And now from the dark horizon, dazzling, flies  
Arrow on fire-plumed arrow to the skies,  
Shot from the bright arc of Apollo's bow ;  
And from the wild and writhen waste below,  
From flashing pools and mounds lit one by one,  
Oh, is it mist, or are these companies  
Of morning heroes who arise, arise  
With thrusting arms, with limbs and hair aglow,  
Toward the risen god, upon whose brow  
Burns the gold laurel of all victories,  
Hero and heroes' god, the invincible Sun ?

ROBERT NICHOLS

## THE TROOPS

Dim gradual thinning of the shapeless gloom  
Shudders to drizzling daybreak that reveals  
Disconsolate men who stamp their sodden boots  
And turn dulled, sunken faces to the sky  
Haggard and hopeless. They, who have beaten down  
The stale despair of night, must now renew  
Their desolation in the truce of dawn,  
Murdering the livid hours that grope for peace.

Yet these, who cling to life with stubborn hands,  
Can grin through storms of death and find a gap  
In the clawed, cruel tangles of his defence.  
They march from safety, and the bird-sung joy  
Of grass-green thickets, to the land where all  
Is ruin, and nothing blossoms but the sky  
That hastens over them where they endure  
Sad smoking, flat horizons, reeking woods,  
And founded trench-lines volleying doom for doom.

O my brave brown companions, when your souls  
 Flock silently away, and the eyeless dead  
 Shame the wild beast of battle on the ridge,  
 Death will stand grieving in that field of war  
 Since your unvanquished hardihood is spent.  
 And through some mooned Valhalla there will pass  
 Battalions and battalions, scarred from hell ;  
 The unreturning army that was youth ;  
 The legions who have suffered and are dust.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

## ASLEEP

Under his helmet, up against his pack,  
 After the many days of work and waking,  
 Sleep took him by the brow and laid him back.  
 And in the happy no-time of his sleeping,  
 Death took him by the heart. There was a quaking  
 Of the aborted life within him leaping . . .  
 Then chest and sleepy arms once more fell slack.  
 And soon the slow, stray blood came creeping  
 From the intrusive lead, like ants on track.

Whether his deeper sleep lie shaded by the shaking  
 Of great wings, and the thoughts that hung the stars,  
 High-pillowed on calm pillows of God's making  
 Above these clouds, these rains, these sieves of lead,  
 And these winds' scimitars ;  
 —Or whether yet his thin and sodden head  
 Confuses more and more with the low mould,  
 His hair being one with the grey grass  
 And finished fields of autumns that are old . . .  
 Who knows ? Who hopes ? Who troubles ? Let it pass !  
 He sleeps. He sleeps less tremulous, less cold,  
 Than we who must awake, and waking, say Alas !

WILFRED OWEN

THE DUG-OUT

Why do you lie with your legs ungainly huddled,  
And one arm bent across your sullen cold  
Exhausted face ? It hurts my heart to watch you,  
Deep-shadow'd from the candle's guttering gold ;  
And you wonder why I shake you by the shoulder ;  
Drowsy, you mumble and sigh and turn your head . . .  
*You are too young to fall asleep for ever ;*  
*And when you sleep you remind me of the dead.*

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

THE DEATH-BED

He drowsed and was aware of silence heaped  
Round him, unshaken as the steadfast walls ;  
Aqueous-like floating rays of amber light,  
Soaring and quivering in the wings of sleep,—  
Silence and safety ; and his mortal shore  
Lipped by the inward, moonless waves of death.

Some one was holding water to his mouth.  
He swallowed, unresisting ; moaned and dropped  
Through crimson gloom to darkness ; and forgot  
The opiate throb and ache that was his wound.  
Water—calm, sliding green above the weir ;  
Water—a sky-lit alley for his boat,  
Bird-voiced, and bordered with reflected flowers  
And shaken hues of summer ; drifting down,  
He dipped contented oars, and sighed, and slept.

Night, with a gust of wind, was in the ward,  
Blowing the curtain to a glimmering curve.  
Night. He was blind ; he could not see the stars  
Glinting among the wraiths of wandering cloud ;  
Queer blots of colour, purple, scarlet, green,  
Flickered and faded in his drowning eyes.

Rain ; he could hear it rustling through the dark ;  
Fragrance and passionless music woven as one ;  
Warm rain on drooping roses ; patterning showers  
That soak the woods ; not the harsh rain that sweeps

Behind the thunder, but a trickling peace  
Gently and slowly washing life away.

He stirred, shifting his body ; then the pain  
Leaped like a prowling beast, and gripped and tore  
His groping dreams with grinding claws and fangs.  
But some one was beside him ; soon he lay  
Shuddering because the evil thing had passed.  
And Death, who'd stepped toward him, paused and stared.

Light many lamps and gather round his bed.  
Lend him your eyes, warm blood, and will to live.  
Speak to him ; rouse him ; you may save him yet.  
He's young ; he hated war ; how should he die  
When cruel old campaigners win safe through ?

But Death replied : "I choose him." So he went,  
And there was silence in the summer night ;  
Silence and safety ; and the veils of sleep.  
Then, far away, the thudding of the guns.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

#### ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle ?  
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.  
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle  
Can patter out their hasty orisons.  
No mockeries for them from prayers or bells,  
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—  
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells ;  
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all ?  
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes  
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.  
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall ;  
Their flowers the tenderness of silent minds,  
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

WILFRED OWEN

## FRAGMENT : THE ABYSS OF WAR

As bronze may be much beautified  
By lying in the dark damp soil,  
So men who fade in dust of warfare fade  
Fairer, and sorrow blooms their soul.

Like pearls which noble women wear  
And, tarnishing, awhile confide  
Unto the old salt sea to feed,  
Many return more lustrous than they were.

WILFRED OWEN

## STRANGE MEETING

It seemed that out of battle I escaped  
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped  
Through granites which titanic wars had groined.  
Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,  
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.  
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared  
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,  
Lifting distressful hands as if to bless.  
And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall,  
By his dead smile I knew we stood in Hell.  
With a thousand pains that vision's face was grained ;  
Yet no blood reached there from the upper ground,  
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.  
'Strange friend,' I said, 'here is no cause to mourn.'  
'None,' said the other, 'save the undone years,  
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,  
Was my life also ; I went hunting wild  
After the wildest beauty in the world,  
Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,  
But mocks the steady running of the hour,

And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.  
For by my glee might many men have laughed,  
And of my weeping something had been left,  
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,  
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.  
Now men will go content with what we spoiled.  
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.  
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress,  
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress.  
Courage was mine, and I had mystery,  
Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery ;  
To miss the march of this retreating world  
Into vain citadels that are not walled.  
Then, when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels  
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,  
Even with truths that lie too deep for taint.  
I would have poured my spirit without stint  
But not through wounds ; not on the cess of war.  
Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.  
I am the enemy you killed, my friend.  
I knew you in this dark ; for so you frowned  
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.  
I parried ; but my hands were loath and cold.  
Let us sleep now . . .'

WILFRED OWEN

## LIGHTS OUT

I have come to the borders of sleep,  
The unfathomable deep  
Forest where all must lose  
Their way, however straight  
Or winding, soon or late ;  
They cannot choose.

Many a road and track  
That, since the dawn's first crack,  
Up to the forest brink,  
Deceived the travellers,  
Suddenly now blurs,  
And in they sink.

Here love ends,  
Despair, ambition ends ;  
All pleasure and all trouble,  
Although most sweet or bitter,  
Here ends in sleep that is sweeter  
Than tasks most noble.

There is not any book  
Or face of dearest look  
That I would not turn from now  
To go into the unknown  
I must enter, and leave, alone,  
I know not how.

The tall forest towers ;  
Its cloudy foliage lowers  
Ahead, shelf above shelf ;  
Its silence I hear and obey  
That I may lose my way  
And myself.

EDWARD THOM

## DIFFUGERE NIVES, 1917

TO J. C. S.

The snows have fled, the hail, the lashing rain,  
Before the spring.

The grass is starred with buttercups again,  
The blackbirds sing.

Now spreads the month that feast of lovely things  
We loved of old.

Once more the swallow glides with darkling wings  
Against the gold.

Now the brown bees about the peach trees boom  
Upon the walls ;

And far away beyond the orchard's bloom  
The cuckoo calls.

The season holds a festival of light  
For you, for me ;

But shadows are abroad, there falls a blight  
On each green tree.

And every leaf unfolding, every flower  
Brings bitter meed ;

Beauty of the morning and the evening hour  
Quickens our need.

All is reborn, but never any spring  
Can bring back this ;

Nor any fullness of midsummer bring  
The voice we miss.

The smiling eyes shall smile on us no more ;  
The laughter clear,

Too far away on the forbidden shore,  
We shall not hear.

Bereft of these until the day we die  
We both must dwell ;

Alone, alone, and haunted by the cry :  
' Hail and farewell ! '

Yet when the scythe of Death shall near us hiss  
Through the cold air,  
Then on the shuddering marge of the abyss  
They will be there.

They will be there to lift us from sheer space  
And empty night ;  
And we shall turn and see them face to face  
In the new light.

So shall we pay the unabated price  
Of their release,  
And found on our consenting sacrifice  
Their lasting peace.

The hopes that fall like leaves before the wind,  
The baffling waste,  
And every earthly joy that leaves behind  
A mortal taste.

The uncompleted end of all things dear,  
The clangor door  
Of death, for ever loud with the last fear,  
Haunt them no more.

Without them the awakening world is dark  
With dust and mire ;  
Yet as they went they flung to us a spark,  
A thread of fire.

To guide us while beneath the sombre skies  
Faltering we tread,  
Until for us like morning stars shall rise  
The deathless dead.

## RAIN

Rain, midnight rain, nothing but the wild rain  
 On this bleak hut, and solitude, and me  
 Remembering again that I shall die  
 And neither hear the rain nor give it thanks  
 For washing me cleaner than I have been  
 Since I was born into this solitude.  
 Blessed are the dead that the rain rains upon :  
 But here I pray that none whom once I loved  
 Is dying to-night, or lying still awake  
 Solitary, listening to the rain,  
 Either in pain or thus in sympathy  
 Helpless among the living and the dead,  
 Like a cold water among broken reeds,  
 Myriads of broken reeds all still and stiff,  
 Like me who have no love which this wild rain  
 Has not dissolved except the love of death.  
 If love it be for what is perfect and  
 Cannot, the tempest tells me, disappoint.

EDWARD THOMAS

## STANZAS FROM 'ELEGY FOR EDWARD THOMAS'

The clods of battlefields are red  
 With immortality : the dead  
 In their magnificence arise  
 To shine before us through the skies.  
 And miracles of heavenly mirth  
 In all the trees and plants on earth  
 Rebuke from every flower and leaf  
 Man's vain impertinence of grief.  
 And feathered birds, and fishes finned,  
 And clouds and rain and calm and wind,  
 And sun and moon and stars, declare  
 All life is one life, everywhere ;  
 That nothing dies to die for good  
 In clay or dust, in stone or wood,  
 But only rests awhile, to keep  
 Life's ancient covenant with Sleep.

CHARLES DALMON

## THE CHIEF CENTURIONS

(FROM 'THE TRAGEDY OF POMPEY THE GREAT')

Man is a sacred city, built of marvellous earth.  
 Life was lived nobly here to give this body birth.  
 Something was in this brain and in this eager hand.  
 Death is so dumb and blind, Death cannot understand.  
 Death drifts the brain with dust and soils the young limbs' glory.  
 Death makes women a dream and men a traveller's story,  
 Death drives the lovely soul to wander under the sky,  
 Death opens unknown doors. It is most grand to die.

JOHN MASEFIELD

## THE PURIFICATION

They have gone over, the god, the friend, the lover,  
 They have gone over.

It is growing grey now ;  
 There comes the end of day now.

They were signs then, the stars were a glory for men,  
 They were signs then.

Those lights flare unseen now,  
 Things paltry and mean now.

They were true pleasure, the friendly trust, the praise without measure,

They were true pleasure.

Praise is an empty sound now.

Trust treads no firm ground now.

They were music, joy, and truth, the kisses she gave him in youth,

They were music, joy, and truth.

They are less beautiful now ;

They are but dutiful now.

Aye, they have come to an end, the god, the lover, the friend ;  
 They have come to an end.

The soul is alone now ;

Strong, naked, full-grown now.

RICHARD CHURCH

## THE DEAD

These hearts were woven of human joys and cares,  
 Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth.  
 The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,  
 And sunset, and the colours of the earth.  
 These had seen movement, and heard music ; known  
 Slumber and waking ; loved ; gone proudly friended ;  
 Felt the quick stir of wonder ; sat alone ;  
 Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is ended.

There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter  
 And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after,  
 Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance  
 And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white  
 Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,  
 A width, a shining peace, under the night.

RUPERT BROOKE

## OUR FRIENDS GO WITH US

Our friends go with us as we go  
 Down the long path where Beauty wends,  
 Where all we love forgathers, so  
 Why should we fear to join our friends ?

Who would survive them to outlast  
 His children ; to outwear his fame—  
 Left when the Triumph has gone past—  
 To win from Age, not Time, a name ?

Then do not shudder at the knife  
 That Death's indifferent hand drives home,  
 But with the Strivers leave the Strife  
 Nor, after Cæsar, skulk in Rome.

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

## FOR THE FALLEN

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,  
England mourns for her dead across the sea.  
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,  
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill : Death august and royal  
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.  
There is music in the midst of desolation  
And glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow,  
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,  
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old :  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again ;  
They sit no more at familiar tables of home ;  
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time ;  
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,  
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,  
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known  
As the stars are known to the Night ;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,  
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,  
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,  
To the end, to the end they remain.



III

1918-1930

## THE RIDGE : 1919

Here on the ridge where the shrill north-easter trails  
Low clouds along the snow,  
And in a streaming moonlit vapour veils  
The peopled earth below,

Let me, O life, a little while forget  
The horror of past years—  
Man and his agony and bloody sweat,  
The terror and the tears,

And struggle only with the mist and snow  
Against the hateless wind,  
Till scourged and shiven I again may go  
To dwell among my kind.

WILFRID GIBSON

## IN WILTSHIRE

Fairest of valleys, in this full-bloomed night,  
Whose air so lullingly,  
Whose dusk so understandingly  
Embraces us, and gives us more than light,

O happy valley, with your poplars manned  
Beneath the visiting moon,  
And talking to the loitering moon,  
Vast as desire, and by an owl-call spanned,

Perfection is your name ; yet (foolish prayer !)  
Well would it be for some,  
And safer your dim grace for some,  
If nothing in your presence could compare

With a far place. That shuttered lampless mill,  
Those white-glanced pools are like,  
These tangled cliffs are all too like  
A valley where our dream-selves tremble still.

The wires and poles that cut the ridge and sky,  
The blackness of these groves,  
The secret patter of river-groves,  
These fits and starts of sound, identify.

My feet along this road, above that stream  
Drop into marching-time,  
Make wild arithmetic of time—  
So like this valley and that dead one seem.

## HUNGER

I come among the peoples like a shadow.  
I sit down by each man's side.

None sees me, but they look on one another,  
And know that I am there.

My silence is like the silence of the tide  
That buries the playground of children ;

Like the deepening of frost in the slow night,  
When birds are dead in the morning.

Armies trample, invade, destroy,  
With guns roaring from earth and air.

I am more terrible than armies,  
I am more feared than cannon.

Kings and chancellors give commands ;  
I give no command to any ;

But I am listened to more than kings  
And more than passionate orators.

I unswear words, and undo deeds.  
Naked things know me.

I am first and last to be felt of the living.  
I am Hunger.

LAURENCE BINYON

## THE DANCER

The young girl dancing lifts her face,  
Passive among the drooping flowers ;  
The jazz band clatters sticks and bones  
In a bright rhythm through the hours.

The men in black conduct her round ;  
With small sensations they are blind :  
Thus Saturn's Moons revolve embraced  
And through the cosmos wind.

But Saturn has not that strange look  
Unhappy, still, and far away,  
As though upon the face of Night  
Lay the bright wreck of day.

W. J. TURNER

## OLD SOLDIER

We wander now who marched before,  
Hawking our bran from door to door,  
While other men from the mill take their flour :  
So it is to be an Old Soldier.

Old, bare and sore, we look on the hound  
Turning upon the stiff frozen ground,  
Nosing the mould, with the night around :  
So it is to be an Old Soldier.

And we who once rang out like a bell,  
Have nothing now to show or to sell ;  
Old bones to carry, old stories to tell :  
So it is to be an Old Soldier.

PADRAIC COLUM

## REPORT ON EXPERIENCE

I have been young, and now am not too old ;  
And I have seen the righteous forsaken,  
His health, his honour and his quality taken.  
    This is not what we were formerly told.

I have seen a green country, useful to the race,  
Knocked silly with guns and mines, its villages vanished,  
Even the last rat and last kestrel banished—  
    God bless us all, this was peculiar grace.

I knew Seraphina ; Nature gave her hue  
Glance, sympathy, note, like one from Eden.  
I saw her smile warp, heard her lyric deaden ;  
    She turned to harlotry ;—this I took to be new.

Say what you will, our God sees how they run.  
These disillusionments are His curious proving  
That He loves humanity and will go on loving ;  
    Over there are faith, life, virtue in the sun.

EDMUND BLUNDEN

## A THOUGHT

When I look into a glass,  
    Myself's my only care,  
But I look into a pool  
    For all the wonders there.

When I look into a glass  
    I see a fool :  
But I see a wise man  
    When I look into a pool.

W. H. DAVIES

## WEATHERS

This is the weather the cuckoo likes,  
    And so do I ;  
When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,  
    And nestlings fly :  
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,  
And they sit outside at 'The Travellers' Rest,'  
And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,  
And citizens dream of the south and west,  
    And so do I.

This is the weather the shepherd shuns,  
    And so do I ;  
When beeches drip in browns and duns,  
    And thresh, and ply ;  
And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,  
And meadow rivulets overflow,  
And drops on gate-bars hang in a row,  
And rooks in families homeward go,  
    And so do I.

THOMAS HARDY

## IN THE FIELDS

Lord, when I look at lovely things which pass,  
 Under old trees the shadows of young leaves  
 Dancing to please the wind along the grass,  
 Or the gold stillness of the August sun on the August  
     sheaves ;  
 Can I believe there is a heavenlier world than this ?  
     And if there is  
 Will the strange heart of any everlasting thing  
     Bring me these dreams that take my breath away ?  
 They come at evening with the home-flying rooks and the  
     scent of hay,  
 Over the fields. They come in Spring.

CHARLOTTE MEW

## THE VOICE

The sun has turned the dusky hill  
 Unto his angry mood ; and down  
 The birchen tops the slant beams spill,  
 And light the green and gild the brown ;  
 And the far frontiers of the fern  
 Like flame-edged clouds of purple burn.

Great flies boom past and grey moths drowse ;  
 On spectral leaves plucked fibre-bare  
 The silkworms drop from hazel boughs,  
 Or swing suspended in the air ;  
 The air that throbs, the air that reels,  
 While the shrill gnat in madness wheels.

‘ Cuckoo, Cuckoo ! ’ up the purple vale,  
 And ‘ Itys, Itys ! ’ in the grove ;  
 The slug that creeps across the trail  
 Has some hushed trumpet-note of love ;  
 Deep in the wood a girl-voice rings,  
 And ‘ Follow, Follow, Follow ! ’ sings.

RICHARD MANSFIELD

## THE BUZZARDS

When evening came and the warm glow grew deeper,  
And every tree that bordered the green meadows  
And in the yellow cornfields every reaper  
And every corn-shock stood above their shadows  
Flung eastward from their feet in longer measure,  
Serenely far there swam in the sunny height  
A buzzard and his mate who took their pleasure  
Swirling and poising idly in golden light.

On great pied motionless moth-wings borne along,  
So effortless and so strong,  
Cutting each other's paths together they glided,  
Then wheeled asunder till they soared divided  
Two valleys' width (as though it were delight  
To part like this, being sure they could unite  
So swiftly in their empty, free dominion),  
Curved headlong downward, towered up the sunny steep,  
Then, with a sudden lift of the one great pinion,  
Swung proudly to a curve, and from its height  
Took half a mile of sunlight in one long sweep.

And we, so small on the swift immense hillside,  
Stood tranced until our souls arose uplifted  
    On those far-sweeping, wide,  
Strong curves of flight—swayed up and hugely drifted,  
Were washed, made strong and beautiful in the tide  
Of sun-bathed air. But far beneath, beholden  
Through shining deeps of air, the fields were golden,  
And rosy burned the heather where cornfields ended.

And still those buzzards whirled, while light withdrew  
Out of the vales and to surging slopes ascended,  
Till the loftiest flaming died to blue.

## THREE NOCTURNS

## I

The valleys that we knew in sunlit hours  
 Are vast and vague as seas ;  
 Wan as the blackthorn flowers  
 That quiver in the first spring-scented breeze ;  
 Far as the frosted hollows of the moon.

The sighing woods are still  
 That climb this mouse-soft hill,  
 Tall nettles rank with rain  
 Scent all the woods with some ancestral fear.

Trees rustle by the water—soon  
 A voice sings near,  
 Too loud, to ward off fright :  
 Then fainter, and in vain,  
 Sings in the yielding and unechoing night.

## II

An owl, horned wizard of the night,  
 Flaps through the air, so soft and still ;  
 Moans, as it wings its flight  
 Toward the mist-wrapped hill.

## III

The milky clouds, dispersing, drift away,  
 Splashing the woods with patches of pale light,  
 Sail high above like silver ships, display  
 The dazzling myriad blossoms of the night.

Ah ! It is worth full many a sun-gilt hour  
 To see the heavens bursting into flower.

## THE SWANS

How lovely are these swans,  
 That float like high proud galleons  
 Cool in the summer heat,  
 And waving leaf-like feet  
 Divide with narrow breasts of snow  
 In a smooth surge  
 This water that is mostly sky ;  
 So lovely that I know  
 Death cannot kill such birds,  
 It could but wound them, mortally.

ANDREW YOUNG

## THE BIRD

The blackbird darted through the boughs  
 Trailing his whistle in a shrill dispute,  
 ' Why do you loiter near our house ? '  
 But I was mute.  
 Though as he perched with sidelong head  
 I might have said,  
 ' I never notice nests or lovers  
 In hedges or in covers ;  
 I have enough to do  
 In my own way to be unnoticed too.'

ANDREW YOUNG

## A BIRD'S EPITAPH

Here lies a little bird,  
 Once all day long  
 Through Martha's house was heard  
 His rippling song.

Tread lightly where he lies  
 Beneath this stone  
 With nerveless wings, closed eyes,  
 And sweet voice gone.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

## THE CHALK-CLIFF

Blasted and bored and undermined  
 By quarrying seas  
 Reared the erect chalk-cliff with black flints lined.  
 (Flints drop like nuts from trees  
 When the frost bites  
 The chalk on winter nights.)

Save for frail shade of jackdaw's flight  
 No night was there,  
 But blue-skyed summer and a cliff so white  
 It stood like frozen air ;  
 Foot slipped on damp  
 Chalk where the limpets camp.

With only purple of sea-stock  
 And jackdaw's shade  
 To mitigate that blazing height of chalk  
 I stood like a soul strayed  
 In paradise  
 Hiding my blinded eyes.

ANDREW YOUNG

## BOATS AT NIGHT

How lovely is the sound of oars at night  
 And unknown voices, borne through windless air,  
 From shadowy vessels floating out of sight  
 Beyond the harbour lantern's broken glare  
 To those piled rocks that make on the dark wave  
 Only a darker stain. The splashing oars  
 Slide softly on as in an echoing cave  
 And with the whisper of the unseen shores  
 Mingle their music, till the bell of night  
 Murmurs reverberations low and deep  
 That droop towards the land in swooning flight  
 Like whispers from the lazy lips of sleep.  
 The oars grow faint. Below the cloud-dim hill  
 The shadows fade and now the bay is still.

EDWARD SHANKS

## THE RUINED CHAPEL

From meadows with the sheep so shorn  
They, not their lambs, seem newly born,  
Through the graveyard I pass,  
Where only blue plume-thistle waves  
And headstones lie so deep in grass  
They follow dead men to their graves ;  
And as I enter by no door  
This chapel where the slow moss crawls,  
I wonder that so small a floor  
Can have the sky for roof, mountains for walls.

ANDREW YOUNG

## THE VILLAIN

While joy gave clouds the light of stars,  
That beamed where'er they looked ;  
And calves and lambs had tottering knees,  
Excited while they sucked ;  
While every bird enjoyed his song,  
Without one thought of harm or wrong—  
I turned my head and saw the wind,  
Not far from where I stood,  
Dragging the corn by her golden hair,  
Into a dark and lonely wood.

W. H. DAVIES

## THE SECRET WOOD

Where there is nothing more to see  
 Than this old earth-bound tree  
 That years ago dry sawdust bled  
 But sprouts each spring a leaf or two  
 As though it tried not to be dead,  
 Or that down-hanging broken bough  
 That keeps its withered leaves till now  
 Like a dead man that cannot move  
 Or take his clothes off,  
 What is it that I seek or who,  
 Fearing from passer-by  
 Intrusion of a foot or eye ?  
 I only know  
 Though all men of earth's beauty speak  
 Beauty here I do not seek  
 More than I sought it on my mother's cheek.

ANDREW YOUNG

## WINTER THE HUNTSMAN

Through his iron glades  
 Rides Winter the Huntsman.  
 All colour fades  
 As his horn is heard sighing.

Far through the forest  
 His wild hooves crash and thunder  
 Till many a mighty branch  
 Is torn asunder.

And the red reynard creeps  
 To his hole near the river,  
 The copper leaves fall  
 And the bare trees shiver

As night creeps from the ground,  
 Hides each tree from its brother,  
 And each dying sound  
 Reveals yet another.

Is it Winter the Huntsman  
 Who gallops through his iron glades,  
 Cracking his cruel whip  
 To the gathering shades ?

OSBERT SITWELL

## LAST SNOW

Although the snow still lingers  
 Heaped on the ivy's blunt webbed fingers  
 And painting tree-trunks on one side,  
 Here in this sunlit ride  
 The fresh unchristened things appear,  
 Leaf, spathe and stem,  
 With crumbs of earth clinging to them  
 To show the way they came,  
 But no flower yet to tell their name,  
 And one green spear  
 Stabbing a dead leaf from below  
 Kills winter at a blow.

ANDREW YOUNG

## THE SEED SHOP

Here in a quiet and dusty room they lie,  
 Faded as crumbled stone or shifting sand,  
 Forlorn as ashes, shrivelled, scentless, dry—  
 Meadows and gardens running through my hand.

In this brown husk a dale of hawthorn dreams,  
 A cedar in this narrow cell is thrust ;  
 It will drink deeply of a century's streams,  
 These lilies shall make summer on my dust.

Here in their safe and simple house of death,  
 Sealed in their shells a million roses leap ;  
 Here I can blow a garden with my breath,  
 And in my hand a forest lies asleep.

MURIEL STUART

## TRUE LOVE

Like as herb and tree in May  
 Flourish from the root,  
 Every lusty heart must rise,  
 And start to love, and fare likewise,—  
 Flower first, then fruit.

For he giveth courage then  
 That lusty month of May,—  
 He calls to mind what true love is,  
 Old service and old gentleness,  
 Forgot upon the way.

For, know you, never worshipful  
 Man nor woman neither  
 But each loved the other well,  
 More than anyone can tell,  
 Each one loving either.

Such love I call virtuous love ;  
 But men, nowadays  
 Cannot love,—not seven night,  
 But they must have all love's delight,  
 Fruit and grace.

Hasty heart,—it cooleth soon,  
 All its love soon told :  
 Winter rasure soon doth rase  
 Summer ;—so is love these days,  
 Soon hot, soon cold !

This is no stability :  
 The old love was not so :  
 Men would love for seven year,  
 In loving truth and tender fear,  
 And wantonness not know.

Call to your remembrance then,  
 The joyous month of May,  
 And call up True Love to you here,  
 Who while she loves, loves very dear,  
 And loves the same alway.

## AFTER LONG SILENCE

Speech after long silence ; it is right,  
 All other lovers being estranged or dead,  
 Unfriendly lamplight hid under its shade,  
 The curtains drawn upon unfriendly night,  
 That we descent and yet again descent  
 Upon the supreme theme of Art and Song :  
 Bodily decrepitude is wisdom ; young  
 We loved each other and were ignorant.

W. B. YEATS

## LOST LOVE

His eyes are quickened so with grief,  
 He can watch a grass or leaf  
 Every instant grow ; he can  
 Clearly through a flint wall see,  
 Or watch the startled spirit flee  
 From the throat of a dead man.  
 Across two counties he can hear  
 And catch your words before you speak.  
 The woodlouse or the maggot's weak  
 Clamour rings in his sad ear,  
 And noise so slight it would surpass  
 Credence—drinking sound of grass,  
 Worm talk, clashing jaws of moth  
 Chumbling holes in cloth ;  
 The groans of ants who undertake  
 Gigantic loads for honour's sake  
 (Their sinews creak, their breath comes thin) ;  
 Whir of spiders when they spin,  
 And minute whispering, mumbling, sighs  
 Of idle grubs and flies.  
 This man is quickened so with grief,  
 He wanders god-like or like thief  
 Inside and out, below, above,  
 Without relief seeking lost love.

ROBERT GRAVES

## I SPEND MY DAYS VAINLY

I spend my days vainly,  
Not in delight ;  
Though the world is elate,  
And tastes her joys finely.

Here wrapped in slow musing  
Lies my dark mind,  
To no music attuned  
Save its own, and despising  
The lark for remoteness,  
The thrush for bold lying,  
The soft wind for blowing,  
And the round sun for brightness.

O tarry for me, sweet ;  
I shall stir, I shall wake !  
And the melody you seek  
Shall be lovely, though late.

FRANK KENDON

## BY THE WEIR

A scent of esparto grass—and again I recall  
That hour we spent by the weir of the paper-mill,  
Watching together the curving thunderous fall  
Of frothing amber, bemused by the roar until  
My mind was as blank as the speckless sheets that wound  
On the hot steel ironing rollers perpetually turning  
In the humming dark rooms of the mill—all sense discerning  
By the stunning and dazzling oblivion of hill-waters drowned.

And my heart was empty of memory, hope, and desire  
Till, rousing, I looked afresh on your face as you gazed—  
Behind you an old gnarled fruit-tree in one still fire  
Of innumerable flame in the sun of October blazed,  
Scarlet and gold that the first white frost would spill  
With eddying flicker and patter of dead leaves falling—  
I looked on your face as an outcast from Eden recalling  
A vision of Eve as she dallied bewildered and still

By the serpent-encircled Tree of Knowledge that flamed  
 With gold and scarlet of good and evil, her eyes  
 Rapt on the river of life : then bright and untamed  
 By the labour and sorrow and fear of a world that dies,  
 Your ignorant eyes looked up into mine ; and I knew  
 That never our hearts should be one till your young lips had  
 tasted

The core of the bitter-sweet fruit, and, wise and toil-wasted,  
 You should stand at my shoulder an outcast from Eden too.

WILFRID GIBSON

ABÉLARD TELLS HIS LOVE TO HÉLOÏSE

Art thou not lovely ?  
 Say yes, say yes, and doubt not,  
 Say . . .  
 What dost thou say ?  
 But to me thou art full lovely,  
 So that I love thee  
 And would heal me  
 At thy fair fountain.

For thou art strength to me  
 And length of days  
 In life that is shortened,  
 Bright threads of light  
 In the dusk's haze.

Swing to ! Swing to !  
 Swing shutters upon the night  
 That the light may here reign.

Such kindness thine eyes spray  
 Clear sight in my blindness,  
 Thou cleanser of pain !

For when I am with thee  
 What is death or ambition ?  
 In the scent of thy being  
 All darkness is slain.

HERBERT PALMER

## LOVE'S FRAGILITY

Hard above all things mortal is  
To sacrifice our love's return :  
We shudder and are bare of bliss  
And our hearts mourn.

For love is lighter than men say ;  
None has been known as light as he.  
His whole profundity is play,  
Pleasant to see.

He's born in the unspoken word  
Or the quick intercourse of eyes.  
A touch, and all his power is stirred ;  
He sings, he flies.

He veers and trembles at a breath,  
As mutable as thistle-down.  
He faints, and he is sick to death  
For a mere frown.

Some bring report of other lands  
Where love's fragility is strong.  
They compass him with iron bands ;  
He suffers long.

They cast him in a dungeon-keep ;  
He digs and burrows like a mole ;  
For forty days denying sleep,  
Yet issues whole.

I well believe that love is strong  
To bear the heaviest dint of doom ;  
Confronts the tempest with a song ;  
Conquers the tomb.

I well believe that love is firm  
 When love is fostered between two :  
 Mortality can set no term  
 If both be true.

But oh, how weak the love of one  
 If counterchange of love's forbad ;  
 If love is plaintive and alone  
 And poor and sad.

The mouth is filled with bitterness ;  
 The echoing air is cold with scorn.  
 We shudder and are bare of bliss  
 And our hearts mourn.

ALAN PORTER

#### SICK LOVE

O Love, be fed with apples while you may,  
 And feel the sun and go in royal array,  
 A smiling innocent on the heavenly causeway,

Though in what listening horror for the cry  
 That soars in outer blackness dismally,  
 The dumb blind beast, the paranoiac fury :

Be warm, enjoy the season, lift your head,  
 Exquisite in the pulse of tainted blood,  
 That infirm passion not to be despised.

Take your delight in momentariness,  
 Walk between dark and dark—a shining space  
 With the grave's narrowness, though not its peace.

ROBERT GRAVES

## WHEN THE ECSTATIC BODY GRIPS

When the ecstatic body grips  
 Its heaven, with little sobbing cries,  
 And lips are crushed on hot blind lips,  
 I read strange pity in your eyes.

For that in you which is not mine,  
 And that in you which I love best,  
 And that, which my day-thoughts divine  
 Masterless still, still unpossessed,

Sits in the blue eyes' frightened stare,  
 A naked lonely-dwelling thing,  
 A frail thing from its body-lair  
 Drawn at my body's summoning :

Whispering low, 'O unknown man,  
 Whose hunger on my hunger wrought,  
 Body shall give what body can,  
 Shall give you all—save what you sought.'

Whispering, 'O secret one, forgive,  
 Forgive and be content though still  
 Beyond the blood's surrender live  
 The darkness of the separate will.

'Enough if in the veins we know  
 Body's delirium, body's peace—  
 Ask not that ghost to ghost shall go,  
 Essence in essence merge and cease.'

But swiftly, as in sudden sleep,  
 That You in you is veiled or dead ;  
 And the world's shrunken to a heap  
 Of hot flesh straining on a bed.

## AN UNMARRIED MOTHER SINGS

Lull, lullaby, all is still and the sea lakes are  
Stretching the light of daytime towards the first star—  
Stretching the grey light on me ; and your child at rest,  
Snuggling the flush of sleep on my troubled breast.

You, gentle love, I would rather have here at ease ;  
You, whose strong love did anoint my limbs with peace ;  
You, O outlawed love, not a priest, not a ghostly thief  
Dare take you now from my thought that's lockjawed by  
grief.

What peace of mind can you have, love ? Ah why not go,  
Wear down your spade to the butt till sweat quenches your  
woe,  
Yes, wear down your black grief, like many a love-crazed  
man  
Who wrenches grass out of his pain in some barren glen.

Go where you will, sacred life, you're my very own ;  
My breath, my breasts, they are full of you, you alone ;  
So, marked till death with your likeness my starved womb  
groans,  
Since you're nailed in love onto my four bones . . .

*Lull, lullaby, lullaby, lulla, lullaby.*

F. R. HIGGINS

## ULLABY

Beloved, may your sleep be sound  
 That have found it where you fed.  
 What were all the world's alarms  
 To mighty Paris when he found  
 Sleep upon a golden bed  
 That first dawn in Helen's arms ?

Sleep, beloved, such a sleep  
 As did that wild Tristram know  
 When, the potion's work being done,  
 Roe could run or doe could leap  
 Under oak and beechen bough,  
 Roe could leap or doe could run ;

Such a sleep and sound as fell  
 Upon Eurotas' grassy bank  
 When the holy bird, that there  
 Accomplished his predestined will,  
 From the limbs of Leda sank  
 But not from her protecting care.

W. B. YEATS

## AURELIA

When within my arms I hold you,  
 Motionless in long surrender,  
 Then what love-words can I summon,  
 Tender as my heart is tender ?

When within your arms you hold me,  
 And kisses speak your love unspoken,  
 Then my eyes with tears run over,  
 And my very heart is broken.

ROBERT NICHOLS

## FREEDOM

Now heaven be thanked, I am out of love again !  
 I have been long a slave, and now am free ;  
 I have been tortured, and am eased of pain ;  
 I have been blind, and now my eyes can see ;  
 I have been lost, and now my way lies plain ;  
 I have been caged, and now I hold the key ;  
 I have been mad, and now at last am sane ;  
 I am wholly I that was but half of me.

So a free man, my dull proud path I plod,  
 Who, tortured, blind, mad, caged, was once a God.

JAN STRUTHER

## FROM 'THEME WITH VARIATIONS'

No pride hath he who sings of escape from love :  
 All songs of escape from love are songs of despair :  
 Who so hath gat him away hath got nowhere.

He sings below all that he knows as above :  
 He hath no mind for the gentle, heart for the fair :

No pride hath he who sings of escape from love :  
 All songs of escape from love are songs of despair.

Who doth not sing as the wild-dove sings to the dove,  
 The night-wild sprite to the moon, of love is bare :  
 He knows not pity, passion, praise, nor prayer :

No pride hath he who sings of escape from love :  
 All songs of escape from love are songs of despair :  
 Who so hath gat him away hath got nowhere.

JAMES STEPHENS

## THE BEAUTIFUL

Three things there are more beautiful  
 Than any man could wish to see :  
 The first, it is a full-rigged ship  
 Sailing with all her sails set free ;  
 The second, when the wind and sun  
 Are playing in a field of corn ;  
 The third, a woman, young and fair,  
 Showing her child before it is born.

W. H. DAVIES

## TOM'S ANGEL

No one was in the fields  
 But me and Polly Flint,  
 When, like a giant across the grass,  
 The flaming angel went.

It was budding time in May,  
 And green as green could be,  
 And all in his height he went along  
 Past Polly Flint and me.

We'd been playing in the woods,  
 And Polly up, and ran,  
 And hid her face, and said,  
 'Tom! Tom! The Man! The Man!'

And I upturned ; and there,  
 Like flames across the sky,  
 With wings all bristling, came  
 The Angel striding by.

And a chaminen overneau  
 Kept whistling in the tree  
 While the Angel, blue as fire, came on  
 Past Polly Flint and me.

And I saw his hair, and all  
 The ruffling of his hem,  
 As over the clovers his bare feet  
 Trod without stirring them.

Polly—she cried ; and, oh !  
 We ran, until the lane  
 Turned by the miller's roaring wheel,  
 And we were safe again.

## THE SPRIG OF LIME

He lay, and those who watched him were amazed  
 To see unheralded beneath the lids  
 Twin tears, new-gathered at the price of pain,  
 Start and at once run crookedly athwart  
 Cheeks channelled long by pain, never by tears.  
 So desolate, too, the sigh next uttered  
 They had wept also, but his great lips moved,  
 And bending down one heard, ‘A sprig of lime;  
 Bring me a sprig of lime.’ Whereat she stole  
 With dumb sign forth to pluck the thing he craved.

So lay he till a lime-twig had been snapped  
 From some still branch that swept the outer grass  
 Far from the silver pillar of the bole,  
 Which, mounting past the house’s crusted roof,  
 Split into massy limbs, crossed boughs, a maze  
 Of close-compacted intercontorted staffs  
 Bowered in foliage, wherethrough the sun  
 Shot sudden showers of light or crystal spars  
 Or wavered in a green and vitreous flood.

And all the while in faint and fainter tones,  
 Scarce audible on deepened evening’s hush,  
 He framed his curious and last request  
 For ‘lime, a sprig of lime.’ Her trembling hand  
 Closed his loose fingers on the awkward stem,  
 Covered about with gentle heart-shaped leaves  
 And under dangling, pale as honey-wax,  
 Square clusters of sweet-scented starry flowers.  
 She laid his bent arm back upon his breast,  
 Then watched above white knuckles clenched in prayer.  
 He never moved. Only at last his eyes  
 Opened, then brightened in such avid gaze  
 She feared the coma mastered him again. . . .  
 But no; strange sobs rose chuckling in his throat,  
 A stranger ecstasy suffused the flesh  
 Of that just mask so sun-dried, gouged and old,  
 Which few—too few!—had loved, too many feared.  
 ‘Father!’ she cried; ‘Father!’

He did not hear.

She knelt, and, kneeling, drank the scent of limes,  
 Blown round the slow blind by a vesperal gust,  
 Till the room swam. So the lime-incense blew  
 Into her life as once it had in his,  
 Though how and when and with what ageless charge  
 Of sorrow and deep joy how could she know?

Sweet lime so hushèdly at the height of noon  
 Diffusing dizzy fragrance from your boughs,  
 Tasselled with blossoms more innumerable  
 Than the black bees, the uproar of whose toil  
 Fills your green vaults, winning such metheglin  
 As clouds their sappy cells, distil, as once  
 Ye used, your sunniest emanations  
 Towards the window where a woman kneels—  
 She who within that room in childish hours  
 Lay through the lasting murmur of blanch'd noon  
 Behind the sultry blind, now full, now flat,  
 Drinking anew of every odorous breath,  
 Supremely happy in her ignorance  
 Of Time that hastens hourly and of Death  
 Who need not haste. Scatter your fumes, O lime,  
 Loose from each hispid star of citron bloom,  
 Tangled beneath the labyrinthine boughs,  
 Cloud on such stinging cloud of exhalation  
 As reeks of youth, fierce life, and summer's prime,  
 Though hardly now shall he in that dusk room  
 Savour your sweetness, since the very sprig,  
 Profuse of blossom and of essences,  
 He smells not, who in a paltering hand  
 Clasps it laid close his peaked and gleaming face  
 Propped in the pillow. Breathe silent, lofty lime,  
 Your curfew secrets out in fervid scent  
 To the attendant shadows! Tinge the air  
 Of the midsummer night that now begins,  
 At an owl's oaring flight from dusk to dusk,  
 And downward caper of the giddy bat  
 Hawking against the lustre of bare skies,  
 With something of th' unfathomable bliss  
 He, who lies dying there, knew once of old

In the serene trance of a summer night,  
 When with th' abundance of his young bride's hair  
 Loosed on his breast he lay and dared not sleep,  
 Listening for the scarce motion of your boughs,  
 Which sighed with bliss as she with blissful sleep,  
 And drinking desperately each honied wave  
 Of perfume wafted past the ghostly blind,  
 First knew th' implacable and bitter sense  
 Of Time that hastes and Death who need not haste.  
 Shed your last sweetness, limes !

But now no more.

She, fruit of that night's love, she heeds you not,  
 Who bent, compassionate, to the dim floor,  
 Takes up the sprig of lime and presses it  
 In pain against the stumbling of her heart,  
 Knowing, untold, he cannot need it now.

ROBERT NICHOLS

#### DIVORCE

(*To My Father*)

When Love, born first of thought and will,  
 Ponders what dooms it shall fulfil,  
 And knows itself and names,  
 Sole son of man to meet and dare  
 All lusts couched in the body's lair  
 Till he their fury tames :

From whom his duty shall he learn,  
 To whom for admonition turn,  
 That his young heart may know  
 What infinite fatality  
 Life shall wreak on him, nor shall he  
 Refuse to undergo ?

Whom but such souls as, torn with pain,  
 Have proved all things and proved them vain  
 And have no joy thereof,  
 Yet lifting their pale heads august  
 Declare the frame of things is just,  
 Nor shall the balance move ?

Each to his teachers—nor of mine,  
 Though long and lofty be the line,  
 Shall any, sir, be set  
 More high in this poor heart than you  
 Who taught me all the good I knew  
 Ere Love and I were met :

Great good and small,—the terms of fate,  
 The nature of the gods, the strait  
 Path of the climbing mind,  
 The freedom of the commonwealth,  
 The laws of soul's and body's health,  
 The commerce of mankind.

The charges launched on Christendom  
 You showed me, ere the years had come  
 When I endured the strain,  
 Yet warned me, unfair tales to balk,  
 What slanders still the pious talk  
 Of Voltaire and Tom Paine.

What early verse of mine you chid,  
 Rebuked the use of *doth* and *did*,  
 Measuring the rhythm's beat ;  
 Or read with me how Cæsar passed,  
 On the March Ides, to hold his last  
 Senate at Pompey's feet !

What words of grace, not understood  
 Until the years had proved them good,  
 Your wisdom set in me,—  
 Until the asps of blindness lay  
 Upon your brows and sucked away  
 Joy, sweetness, memory.

Now all the pages of the wise,  
 Whereon for happiness your eyes  
 Were wisely apt to pore,  
 Upon another's mouth depend,  
 And friend by step is known from friend,  
 And faces seen no more.

Now, now the work all men must do  
 Is mightily begun in you ;  
     And the sure-cutting days  
 Leave you, disfurnished, dispossessed  
 Of earth, to seek your spirit's rest  
     Beyond our mortal ways.

Now, now in you the great divorce  
 Begins, whose everlasting source  
     Sprang up before the sun,  
 Whose chill dividing waters roll  
 'Twixt flesh and spirit, mind and soul,—  
     Than death more deeply run :

Divorce, sole healer of divorce ;  
 For our deep sickness of remorse  
     Sole draught medicinal,  
 Which Grief from bitter herbage brews  
 Where Babylonish waters ooze  
     O'er Mansoul's shattered wall ;

Divorce, who cries all mortal banns ;  
 Chief foreman of the artisans  
     Who quarry from Time's pit  
 New stuff for souls, hewn stone on stone ;  
 Piercer of hearts, by whom is shown  
     Death in death implicit ;

Divorce, itself for God and Lord  
 By the profounder creeds adored :  
     Who in eternity,  
 A bright proceeding ardour, parts  
 The filial and paternal hearts,  
     And knits the riven Three.

O if in holier hours I meet  
 Your happier head in Sarras' street,  
     When our blind years are done,  
 What song remains shall run to pay  
 Its duty, sir, from me that day,  
     Your pupil and your son.

## FATHER AND SON

Only last week, walking the hushed fields  
 Of our most lovely Meath, now thinned by November,  
 I came to where the road from Laracor leads  
 To the Boyne river—that seemed more lake than river,  
 Stretched in uneasy light and stript of reeds.

And walking longside an old weir  
 Of my people's, where nothing stirs—only the shadowed  
 Leaden flight of a heron up the lean air—  
 I went unmanly with grief, knowing how my father,  
 Happy though captive in years, walked last with me there.

Yes, happy in Meath with me for a day  
 He walked, taking stock of herds hid in their own breathing ;  
 And naming colts, gusty as wind, once steered by his hand,  
 Lightnings winked in the eyes that were half shy in greeting  
 Old friends—the wild blades, when he gallivanted the land.

For that proud, wayward man now my heart breaks—  
 Breaks for that man whose mind was a secret eyrie,  
 Whose kind hand was sole signet of his race,  
 Who curbed me, scorned my green ways, yet increasingly  
     loved me  
 Till Death drew its grey blind down his face.

And yet I am pleased that even my reckless ways  
 Are living shades of his rich calms and passions—  
 Witnesses for him and for those faint namesakes  
 With whom now he is one, under yew branches,  
 Yes, one in a graven silence no bird breaks.

## THE IMMIGRANT

When Ruth was old  
She'd take her children's children on her knee.  
They never wearied to be told  
Tales of her girlhood in a far country.

For though her eyes grew dim,  
Men said of her, ' Her heart is always young,'  
And Boaz, while she spoke to him,  
Loved the faint accent of a foreign tongue.

FRANK KENDON

## THE FIELDS ARE FULL

The fields are full of summer still,  
And breathe again upon the air  
From brown dry side of hedge and hill  
More sweetness than the sense can bear.

So some old couple, who in youth  
With love were filled and over-full,  
And loved with strength and loved with truth,  
In heavy age are beautiful.

EDWARD SHANKS

## AT THE GRAVE OF HENRY VAUGHAN

Above the voiceful windings of a river  
An old green slab of simply graven stone  
Shuns notice, overshadowed by a yew.  
Here Vaughan lies dead, whose name flows on for ever  
Through pastures of the spirit washed with dew  
And starlit with eternities unknown.

Here sleeps the Silurist ; the loved physician ;  
The face that left no portraiture behind ;  
The skull that housed white angels and had vision  
Of daybreak through the gateways of the mind.

Here faith and mercy, wisdom and humility  
(Whose influence shall prevail for evermore)  
Shine. And this lowly grave tells Heaven's tranquillity . . .  
And here stand I, a suppliant at the door.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

## I LOVE THE BEGINNING OF ALL RAIN

All things are best when first begun,  
 A love that's guessed, a race unrun,  
 And those bright notes that in the brain  
 Fall brief, beginning of the rain,  
 Just two or one  
 That splash, and to the dust belong,  
 And might have been a rush of song.

GEOFFREY SCOTT

## FULL MOON

A man that I know likes the bare tree best ;  
 And many, a moon that's a silver shaving ;  
 But I, whatsoever is all-expressed,—  
 Full moon, high summer and cornfields waving.

Everyone praises the opening flower . . .  
 I praise the woman grown wise and tender,  
 And him who shows me a hard-won power  
 Of hand or wit in prolific splendour.

CLIFFORD BAX

## ALMSWOMEN

At Quincey's moat the straggling village ends,  
 And there in the almshouse dwell the dearest friends  
 Of all the village, two old dames that cling  
 As close as any true-loves in the spring.  
 Long, long ago they passed three-score-and-ten,  
 And in this doll's house lived together then ;  
 All things they have in common being so poor,  
 And their one fear, Death's shadow at the door.  
 Each sundown makes them mournful, each sunrise  
 Brings back the brightness in their failing eyes.

How happy go the rich fair weather days  
 When on the roadside folk stare in amaze  
 At such a honeycomb of fruit and flowers  
 As mellows round their threshold ; what long hours

They gloat upon their steepling hollyhocks,  
 Bee's balsams, feathery southernwood and stocks,  
 Fiery dragon's-mouths, great mallow leaves  
 For salves, and lemon-plants in bushy sheaves,  
 Shagged Esau's-hands with five green finger-tips.  
 Such sweet old names are ever on their lips.

As pleased as little children where these grow  
 In cobbled pattens and worn gowns they go,  
 Proud of their wisdom when on gooseberry shoots  
 They stick egg shells to fright from coming fruits  
 The brisk-billed rascals ; scanning still to see  
 Their neighbour owls saunter from tree to tree,  
 Or in the hushing half-light mouse the lane  
 Long-winged and lordly.

But when those hours wane  
 Indoors they ponder, scared by the harsh storm  
 Whose pelting saracens on the window swarm,  
 And listen for the mail to clatter past  
 And church clock's deep bay withering on the blast ;  
 They feed the fire that flings its freakish light  
 On pictured kings and queens grotesquely bright,  
 Platters and pitchers, faded calendars  
 And graceful hour-glass trim with lavenders.

Many a time they kiss and cry and pray  
 That both be summoned in the selfsame day,  
 And wiseman linnet tinkling in his cage  
 End too with them the friendship of old age,  
 And all together leave their treasured room  
 Some bell-like evening when the May's in bloom.

EDMUND BLUNDEN

#### MRS. REECE LAUGHS

Laughter, with us, is no great undertaking ;  
 A sudden wave that breaks and dies in breaking.  
 Laughter, with Mrs. Reece, is much less simple :  
 It germinates, it spreads, dimple by dimple,  
 From small beginnings, things of easy girth,  
 To formidable redundancies of mirth.

Clusters of subterranean chuckles rise,  
 And presently the circles of her eyes  
 Close into slits, and all the woman heaves,  
 As a great elm with all its mounds of leaves  
 Wallows before the storm. From hidden sources  
 A mustering of blind volcanic forces  
 Takes her and shakes her till she sobs and gapes.  
 Then all that load of bottled mirth escapes  
 In one wild crow, a lifting of huge hands  
 And creaking stays, a visage that expands  
 In scarlet ridge and furrow. Thence collapse,  
 A hanging head, a feeble hand that flaps  
 An apron-end to stir an air and waft  
 A steaming face. . . . And Mrs. Reece has laughed.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

#### PRELUDE TO CRICKET

Before we came the moon-soaked dews were here,  
 Washing the feet of thrushes while they sang.  
 No sun was up when this May morning rang  
 With the first meadow-music of the year.  
 Those birds had quired their lovely-throated thanks  
 To see again the world they loved appear,  
 The cricket ground, the old elm branching clear,  
 The daisies on the boundary's unscythed banks,  
 The green pavilion whose hour draws near,  
 And (lost ball, six !) the green and brackish mere.

God's praise, Spring sweetness ; these, before we came,  
 Were all : the cool, quiet morning barely stirred.  
 Now we take on the lease from singing bird,  
 Assembling here in traffic for a game.  
 Soon we'll be ready, every man and lad  
 Tip-toeing, braced how briskly, for the glad  
 Beginning and the umpire's call of ' Play ! '  
 Busy beneath the hot, slow-circling sun  
 We'll carry the morning's echo singing on  
 With its full gracious flavour in every run  
 Down to the wicket-drawing close of day.  
 No frowning combat ours, barren of pranks

And genial moves of venture ; lost or won  
 We'll make it easy, first and last, to find  
 The clean bright clash of comrades in our match.  
 All we accomplish, even the bungled catch  
 Shall challenge joy 'twixt two fresh-flannelled ranks,  
 Making for summer beauty in the mind  
 And life's good game when this game's left behind.

And as we crowd its setting to the frame  
 With lightheart laughter and complete content  
 We'll think, not birds alone had earlier lease  
 Of these green acres, rich with grass-lawn scent,  
 And centred in a groundsman's popping crease.  
 Even as we pitch our wicket, flickering near  
 Are shades of men who found this cricket dear  
 And sealed their happy ventures ere we came.

THOMAS MOULT

## FOREFATHERS

Here they went with smock and crook,  
 Toiled in the sun, lolled in the shade,  
 Here they muddled out the brook  
 And here their hatchet cleared the glade :  
 Harvest-supper woke their wit,  
 Huntsman's moon their wooings lit.

From this church they led their brides,  
 From this church themselves were led  
 Shoulder-high ; on these waysides  
 Sat to take their beer and bread.  
 Names are gone—what men they were  
 These their cottages declare.

Names are vanished, save the few  
 In the old brown Bible scrawled ;  
 These were men of pith and thew,  
 Whom the city never called ;  
 Scarce could read or hold a quill,  
 Built the barn, the forge, the mill.

On the green they watched their sons  
 Playing till too dark to see,  
 As their fathers watched them once,  
 As my father once watched me ;  
 While the bat and beetle flew  
 On the warm air webbed with dew.

Unrecorded, unrenowned,  
 Men from whom my ways begin,  
 Here I know you by your ground,  
 But I know you not within—  
 There is silence, there survives  
 Not a moment of your lives.

Like the bee that now is blown  
 Honey-heavy on my hand,  
 From his toppling tansy-throne  
 In the green tempestuous land,—  
 I'm in clover now, nor know  
 Who made honey long ago.

EDMUND BLUNDEN

## TOWN MAID

As home again I travelled regretfully through London,  
 She entered. She was pretty, and pranked in all the fashion.  
 Who can doubt she likes it, her Babylonian bondage, . . .

The noise, the never-ending streets,  
 The pale and clever faces ?

Yet as our eyes encountered, I saw her go to milking  
 Across the unknown meadows until her shoes were golden . . .  
 Was it her mother's mother who looked at me, or was it  
 No faded ghost, and had I seen,  
 Perhaps, her children's children ?

CLIFFORD BAX

## FRENCH PEASANTS

These going home at dusk  
Along the lane,  
After the day's warm work,  
Do not complain.

Were you to say to them,  
‘ What does it mean ?  
What is it all about,  
This troubled dream ? ’

They would not understand,  
They'd go their way,  
Or, if they spoke at all,  
They'd surely say,

‘ Dawn is the time to rise,  
Days are to earn  
Bread and the mid-day rest,  
Dusk to return ;

‘ To be content, to pray.  
To hear songs sung,  
Or to make wayside love,  
If one is young.

‘ All from the good God comes,  
All then is good ;  
Sorrow is known to Him,  
And understood.’

One who had questioned all,  
And was not wise,  
Might be ashamed to meet  
Their quiet eyes.

All is so clear to them,  
All is so plain,  
These who go home at dusk  
Along the lane.

## FESTIVAL IN TUSCANY

A low stream by a winding track,  
 A poplar-bordered plain,  
 And here at dusk our way was barred  
 Along a Tuscan lane.

Smoking and jostling peasants lounged  
 Across the road, and boys  
 Were larking—yet grew silent when  
 They heard a silver noise,

And down the lane a bellman came  
 Ringing a warning bell ;  
 Then pipes were out and heads were bared,  
 A grave silence fell.

For here came little maids in white  
 With veils upon the head,  
 Small Daughters of the Sacred Heart,  
 Girded about in red.

So newly born and pure and meek  
 Singing a psalm or prayer ;  
 I suddenly saw the first of stars  
 Dawn in the sallow air.

Then maidens grown and soon to wed,  
 Tall maidens, two by two,  
 Daughters of Mary, clad in white,  
 Girded about with blue.

Black-gowned the wives and mothers walked,  
 Stark-faced and harrow-lined ;  
 Under a darkly kerchiefed brow  
 Their eyes were wise and kind.

Behind them sons and fathers came,  
With heavy step they trod ;  
Earth-stained and dumb with candles lit,  
And after them came God.

Christ on the Cross ! thorns on His brow !  
The spear-wound in His side ;  
He poured His life into their lives  
When He was crucified.

I heard a quaking amid the wheat,  
The night began to sigh,  
A faint moon shone, a poplar shook  
Against an ashen sky ;  
The vines leaned out and wrung their hands  
When the dead Lord went by.

Lamps on long poles lit up a braw  
Blood-stained but aureoled . . .  
After that dark and tortured Form,  
White-vested, golden-stoled,

The Priest came bearing the sacred Host  
Wherein Christ lives again :  
We were but heathen, yet we kneeled  
While God went down the lane.

WILLIAM FORCE STEAD

## THE CICADAS

Sightless, I breathe and touch ; this night of pines  
 Is needly, resinous and rough with bark.  
 Through every crevice in the tangible dark  
 The moonlessness above it all but shines.

Limp hangs the leafy sky ; never a breeze  
 Stirs, nor a foot in all this sleeping ground ;  
 And there is silence underneath the trees—  
 The living silence of continuous sound.

For like inveterate remorse, like shrill  
 Delirium throbbing in the fevered brain,  
 An unseen people of cicadas fill  
 Night with their one harsh note, again, again.

Again, again, with what insensate zest !  
 What fury of persistence, hour by hour !  
 Filled with what demon that denies them rest,  
 Drunk with what source of pleasure and of power ?

Life is their madness, life that all night long  
 Bids them to sing and sing, they know not why ;  
 Mad cause and senseless burden of their song ;  
 For life commands and ‘ life ! ’ is all their cry.

I hear them sing, who in the double night  
 Of clouds and branches fancied that I went  
 Through my own spirit’s dark discouragement,  
 Deprived of inward as of outward sight ;

Who, seeking, even as here in the wild wood,  
 A lamp to beckon through my tangled fate,  
 Found only darkness and, disconsolate,  
 Mourned the lost purpose and the vanished good.

Now in my empty heart the crickets' shout  
Re-echoing denies and still denies  
With stubborn folly all my learned doubt,  
In madness more than I in reason wise.

Life, life! The word is magical. They sing,  
And in my darkened soul the great sun shines;  
My fancy blossoms with remembered spring,  
And all my autumns ripen on the vines.

Life! and each knuckle of the fig tree's pale  
Dead skeleton breaks out with emerald fire.  
Life! and the tulips blow, the nightingale  
Calls back the rose, calls back the old desire.

And old desire that is for ever new,  
Desire, life's earliest and latest birth,  
Life's instrument to suffer and to do,  
Springs with the roses from the teeming earth.

Desire that from the world's bright body strips  
Deforming time and makes each kiss the first;  
That gives to hearts, to satiated lips  
The endless bounty of to-morrow's thirst.

Time passes and the watery moonrise peers  
Between the tree-trunks. But no outer light  
Tempers the chances of our groping years,  
No moon beyond our labyrinthine night.

Clueless we go; but I have heard thy voice,  
Divine unreason! harping in the leaves,  
And grieve no more; for wisdom never grieves,  
And thou hast taught me wisdom; I rejoice.

## FROM 'REQUIEM'

The feathers in a fan  
 are not so frail as man ;  
 the green embossed leaf  
 than man is no more brief.  
 His life is not so loud  
 as the passing of a cloud ;  
 his death is quieter  
 than harebells, when they stir.  
 The years that have no form  
 and substance are as warm,  
 and space has hardly less  
 supreme an emptiness.  
 And yet man being frail  
 does on himself prevail,  
 and with a single thought  
 can bring the world to naught,  
 as being brief he still  
 bends to his fleeting will  
 all time, and makes of it  
 the shadow of his wit.  
 Soundless in life and death  
 although he vanisheth,  
 the echo of a song  
 makes all the stars a gong.  
 Cold, void, and yet the grim  
 darkness is hot with him,  
 and space is but the span  
 of the long love of man.

HUMBERT WOLFE

## FARE WELL

When I lie where shades of darkness  
 Shall no more assail mine eyes,  
 Nor the rain make lamentation  
 When the wind sighs ;  
 How will fare the world whose wonder  
 Was the very proof of me ?  
 Memory fades, must the remembered  
 Perishing be ?

Oh, when this my dust surrenders  
Hand, foot, lip, to dust again,  
May these loved and loving faces  
Please other men !

May the rustling harvest hedgerow  
Still the Traveller's Joy entwine,  
And as happy children gather  
Posies once mine.

Look thy last on all things lovely,  
Every hour. Let no night  
Seal thy sense in deathly slumber  
Till to delight  
Thou have paid thy utmost blessing ;  
Since that all things thou wouldest praise  
Beauty took from those who loved them  
In other days.

WALTER DE LA MARE

## MOST LOVELY SHADE

Most lovely Dark, my *Aethiopia* born  
Of the shade's richest splendour, leave not me  
Where in the pomp and splendour of the shade  
The dark air's leafy plumes no more a lulling music made.

Dark is your fleece, and dark the airs that grew  
Amid those weeping leaves.  
Plantations of the East drop precious dew  
That, ripened by the light, rich leaves perspire.  
Such are the drops that from the dark airs' feathers flew.

Most lovely Shade . . . Syrinx and Dryope  
And that smooth nymph that changed into a tree  
Are dead . . . the shade, that *Aethiopia*, sees  
Their beauty make more bright its treasures—  
Their amber blood in porphyry veins still grows  
Deep in the dark secret of the rose  
And the smooth stem of many a weeping tree,  
And in your beauty grows.

Come then, my pomp and splendour of the shade,  
 Most lovely cloud that the hot sun made black  
 As dark-leaved airs,—

Come then, O precious cloud,  
 Lean to my heart : no shade of a rich tree  
 Shall pour such splendour as your heart to me.

EDITH SITWELL

#### THE MOON WORSHIPPERS

We are the partly real ones  
 Whose bodies are an accident,  
 Whose half-born souls were never meant  
 To fix their unsubstantial thrones  
 Inside a house of blood and bones.

All day we creep about the brain,  
 Benumbed and deafened with the noise  
 Of carnal pains and carnal joys,  
 That thrust their stupid joy and pain  
 Across the peace of our disdain.

But when the grosser senses swoon,  
 Then with dances privily,  
 And the wordless litany,  
 A million ghosts will importune  
 Our vestal mistress, lady Moon :

‘O undefiled, O lucid Moon,  
 Hear our attenuated cry !  
 O little fish of the cold sky,  
 O swimmer of the void lagoon,  
 O Moon, shall our release be soon ?’

E. R. DODD

## THE FOREST-BIRD

The loveliest things of earth are not  
Her lilies, waterfalls or trees ;  
Or clouds that float like still, white stones  
Carved upon azure seas ;  
Or snow-white orchids, scarlet-lipped  
In darkness of damp woods,  
In hush of shadowy leaves ;  
Or the pale foam that lights the coast  
Of earth on moonless eves.

The moon is lovely, and the sea's  
Bright shadow on the sand ;  
The phantom vessel as it glides  
Out from the phantom land ;  
And, hung above the shadowed earth,  
Moored in a crystal sky,  
That fleet of phantom lights :  
These are but beauty's fading flags,  
Her perishable delights.

But in transparency of thought  
Out of the branched, dark-foliaged word  
There flits a strange, soft-glimmering light,  
Shy as a forest-bird.  
Most lovely and most shy it comes  
From realm of sense unknown,  
And sings of earthly doom,  
Of an immortal happiness  
In the soul's deepening gloom.

## THE GAY

Those moon-gilded dancers  
 Prankt like butterflies,  
 Theirs was such lovely folly  
 It stayed my rapt eyes :  
 But my heart that was pondering  
 Was sadly wise.

To be so lighthearted  
 What pain was left behind ;  
 What fetters fallen gave them  
 Unto this airy mind :  
 What dark sins were pardoned ;  
 What God was kind !

I with long anguish bought  
 Joy that was soon in flight ;  
 And wondered what these paid  
 For years of young delight ;  
 Ere they were born what tears  
 Through what long night.

All these gay cheeks, light feet,  
 Were telling over again,  
 But in a heavenly accent,  
 A tale of ancient pain  
 That, the joy spent, must pass  
 To sorrow again.

I went into the wilderness  
 Of night to be alone,  
 Holding sorrow and joy  
 Hugged to my heart as one,  
 Lest they fly on those wild ways  
 And life be undone.

## DON JUAN'S ADDRESS TO THE SUNSET

Exquisite stillness ! What serenities  
Of earth and air ! How bright atop the wall  
The stonecrop's fire, and beyond the precipice  
How huge, how hushed the primrose evenfall !  
How softly, too, the white crane voyages  
Yon honeyed height of warmth and silence, whence  
He can look down on islet, lake and shore  
And voiceless woods and pathless promontories,  
Or, further gazing, view the magnificence  
Of cloud-like mountains and of mountainous cloud  
Or ghostly wrack below the horizon rim  
Not even his eye has vantage to explore.  
Now, spirit, find out wings and mount to him,  
Wheel where he wheels, where he is soaring soar,  
Hang where now he hangs in the planisphere—  
Evening's first star and golden as a bee  
In the sun's hair—for happiness is here !

ROBERT NICHOLS

## TREE PURGE

I, driven, deeper driven in the glade,  
As one from blood-guilt (Lord have mercy !)  
Flying, seeking sanctuary,  
From Fear the Avenger flying to green shade . . .

Your strength, O trees, your stature,  
Not by these,  
O not by these alone  
From the crimson shadow,  
From my tormented nature,  
Save me, O trees !

I, inward have I known,  
 Beneath rough bark,  
 The pulse of the sap, the life-blood in the dark  
 Pounding, pounding up  
 From the blind-nurtured root :  
 Felt those streams course  
 Through giant trunk and bough with passionless force—  
 No passion and no fever and no lust—  
 To where miraculous the green leaves shoot  
 Skyward, from dust.

I, therefore, to that flood,  
 I fugitive cry,  
 Let my tumultuous blood,  
 Red rivulet in spate  
 Pricking with lust and turbulent with hate,  
 A tributary run :  
 To sink itself and so again be found,  
 In life not mine washed, overwhelmed and drowned,  
 All lost,  
 All won,  
 Crimson no more, and I no longer I,  
 In that green channel sucked toward the sun.

GEORGE ROSTREVOR HAMILTON

#### THEME

The golden eve is all astir,  
 The tides of sunset flood on us  
 —Incredible, miraculous—  
 We look with adoration on  
 Beauty coming, beauty gone,  
 That waits not any looking on.

Thoughts will bubble up, and break,  
Spilling a sea, a limpid lake,  
Into the soul ; and, as they go  
—Lightning visitors ! we know  
A lattice opened, and the mind  
Poised for all that is behind  
The lattice, and the poising mind.  
Could the memory but hold !  
—All the sunsets, flushed with gold,  
Are streaming in it !

All the store  
Of all that ever was before  
Is teeming in it !

All the wit  
Of holy living, holy writ,  
Waiting till we remember it,  
Is dreaming in it !

JAMES STEPHENS

ON MIDDLETON EDGE

If this life-saving rock should fail  
Yielding too much to my embrace,  
And rock and I to death should race,  
The rock would stay there in the dale  
While I, breaking my fall,  
Would still go on  
Further than any wandering star has gone.

ANDREW YOUNG

## NORTHERN LIGHT

Here under Heaven ringed  
 With fingering pale fires  
 The soul unpacks to lose  
 Her burden of desires.

Thoughts are the clean gulls,  
 Flesh cool as a bone,  
 The mind is a wave here  
 And the heart a stone.

L. A. G. STRONG

## NIGHT PIECE

The Pole, the Bear, and Cassiopeia  
 So softly shining,  
 Dark heaven, dark world, to an exquisite dim  
 Defeat consigning,  
 Do turn by day away from us, away from us  
 Their careless faces,  
 From our golden fire and the triumphs of time  
 As from time's disgraces.

We are but dew of their dawn, a commodious dew  
 That life engenders,  
 Of death and its dark mysterious fears  
 Getters and spenders,  
 Whose spirit seeks the wooing air, that wooing air  
 On heaven reclining  
 With the Pole, the Bear, and Cassiopeia  
 Endlessly shining.

A. E. COPPARD

## IN TIME LIKE GLASS

In Time like glass the stars are set,  
And seeming-fluttering butterflies  
Are fixed fast in Time's glass net  
With mountains and with maids' bright eyes.

Above the cold Cordilleras hung  
The wingèd eagle and the Moon :  
The gold, snow-throated orchid sprung  
From gloom where peers the dark baboon :  
The Himalayas' white, rapt brows ;  
The jewel-eyed bear that threads their caves ;  
The lush plains' lowing herds of cows ;  
That Shadow entering human graves :  
All these like stars in Time are set,  
They vanish but can never pass ;  
The Sun that with them fades is yet  
Fast-fixed as they in Time like glass.

W. J. TURNER

## THE MIDNIGHT SKATERS

The hop-poles stand in cones,  
The icy pond lurks under,  
The pole-tops steeple to the thrones  
Of stars, sound gulfs of wonder ;  
But not the tallest there, 'tis said,  
Could fathom to this pond's black bed.

Then is not death at watch  
Within those secret waters ?  
What wants he but to catch  
Earth's heedless sons and daughters ?  
With but a crystal parapet  
Between, he has his engines set.

Then on, blood shouts, on, on,  
Twirl, wheel and whip above him,  
Dance on this ball-floor thin and wan,  
Use him as though you love him ;  
Court him, elude him, reel and pass,  
And let him hate you through the glass.

## THE SEA

You, you are all unloving, loveless, you ;  
 Restless and lonely, shaken by your own moods,  
 You are celibate and single, scorning a comrade even,  
 Threshing your own passions with no woman for the  
     threshing-floor,  
 Finishing your dreams for your own sake only,  
 Playing your great game around the world, alone,  
 Without playmate, or helpmate, having no one to cherish,  
 No one to comfort, and refusing any comforter.

Not like the earth, the spouse all full of increase  
 Moiled over with rearing of her many-mouthed young ;  
 You are single, you are fruitless, phosphorescent, cold and  
     callous,  
 Naked of worship, of love or of adornment,  
 Scorning the panacea even of labour,  
 Sworn to a high and splendid purposelessness  
 Of brooding and delighting in the secret of life's goings,  
 Sea, only you are free, sophisticated.

You who take the moon in a sieve, and sift  
 Her flake by flake, and spread her meaning out ;  
 You who roll the stars like jewels in your palm,  
 So that they seem to utter themselves aloud ;  
 You who steep from out the days their colour,  
 Reveal the universal tint that dyes  
 Their web ; who shadow the sun's great gestures and  
     expressions  
 So that he seems a stranger in his passing ;  
 Who voice the dumb night fittingly ;  
 Sea, you shadow of all things, now mock us to death with  
     your shadowing.

D. H. LAWRENCE

## LEVIATHAN

## I

Leviathan drives the eyed prow of his face,  
With the surge dumbly rippling round his lips,  
Toward the Atlantid shore ;  
Not flat and golden like the Cherubim,  
Or a face round and womanish like the Seraphim,  
But thick and barbed—the broad, barbed cheeks of Donne.

Beneath he stretched his hands to the sea forests,  
Obscure and thick, with the cool freshes under,  
Lifts his surprised brows to the sky's milky light,  
New come from the abyss.

While a faint radiance, webbed from the waves' substance,  
Clung to his changing limbs and his coiled body,  
Reddening, making them darker than the sea,  
Or half translucent.

And when the mouths of Atlantean brooks  
Struck on his mouth with taste of sudden cold  
And wound his shoulders like embracing hands,  
He put out both thick palms and felt the shallows.

The salt had scurfed his body with white fire  
And knotted the rough hair between his breasts,  
And as he rose delicate Atlantis trembled,  
Tilting upon the sea's plain like a leaf.

The passionless air hung heavy on Atlantis,  
And the inclined spears of the flowering bushes  
Smoothly dropped down their loosened, threaded petals,  
Softening the pathways.

For tideless night had covered her, and sealed  
All scent within the narrow throat of flowers,  
And sound within the navel of the hills,  
And stars in the confusion of the air.

Within her darkness and unconsciousness  
 She hid all beauty, and her silences  
 Sound's measures and sequences,  
 And the black earth quickened  
 With oppression of blossom.

Ah, thief that swims by night—Leviathan,  
 Rolled blindly in the wave's trough like a rotting thing,  
 Come to Atlantis' further edge by dark,  
 Poised over her quietness ;

Measureless drunkard of the bitter sea,  
 Insatiate, like some slow stain  
 Creeping on pleasure's face,  
 Like sudden misery.

So foul, so desolate,  
 That you are crept to seek new life,  
 Have crossed the water's plain,  
 Desiring and by stealth to gain  
 For rankness, foolishness and half-conceivèd beauty  
 Some perfect shape—an Atlantean body.

## II

A music met Leviathan returning,  
 While the still troubled waters of his passage  
 Danct every island like a lily head.  
 Through all the shadowed throats of the wide forest  
 His unnumbered monster children rode to greet him  
 On horses winged and dappled over like flowers.

Now huddled waves had lulled their bursting foam  
 And slight clouds laid their breasts upon the sea ;  
 The sullen winds, head downward from the sky,  
 Solicited his movement on their viols.

And the palm trees, heat weary,  
Chafing smooth limbs within a rinded shell,  
Spoke of his coming with soft acclamation,  
Like watchers long grown tired, languid and sorry :

‘Look, how he comes’—as faint as whispering deer—  
‘What storm and state he brings.’ Then louder voices,  
The unchaste turtles crying out with pleasure,  
And badgers from the earth  
Sprawled upon the rocks with animal laughter.

‘The Cretan bull ferrying across the sea  
Bore home no richer load ;  
In the reed forest of Eurotas’ bank  
That quivering swan, clapping strong wings together,  
With harsh, sweet voice called out no keener marriage.  
Then shrill response, as seeming from the air,  
Invoking joy, summoning desire :

‘Hither desires,  
Coming as thick and hot as the press and hurry of blood  
Striking the apse of the brain,  
Ranging abroad, carrying your torches high,  
Running as light and remote as a scattered cast of pearls.’

Then antic spirits from the tulip trees :  
‘We must have tumblers like a wheel of fire.  
We must have dancers moving their suave hands :  
The tumblers strung backward like a hoop  
Until they thrust vermillioned cheeks between their knees.

And the intricacy  
Of sweet involving gaiety,  
And wine to warm our innocence,  
Music to soothe the prickled sense,  
Sounding like water or like ringing glass.’

The mitred Queen of Heaven stirred on her broad, low throne,  
 Setting the lattice just so much ajar  
 That wandering airs from earth should cool the room,  
 Peered down on more-than-Leda and smoothed her wrinkled  
 snood,  
 Crying to her Father-Spouse—‘ Dear Lord, how sweet she  
 looks.’

The clumsy hierarchies,  
 Wearied by their continual task of praise,  
 Rested wide heifer eyes upon her fallen lids.  
 Islanded in stars,  
 Even the keen Intelligences turned away  
 From mathematic splendour of the spheres’ incessant, rolling  
 chime.

Himself, the Father moved,  
 Traditional and vast,  
 Remembering fresher years,  
 Might have inclined his steeply pinnacled head,  
 But his more zealous Son,  
 As neat as Thammuz, with smooth, pallid cheeks,  
 Sensing an evil, shut the casement fast.

• • • •  
 But I, remembering Atlantis, wept,  
 Remembering her paths and their unswept flowers,  
 Clean beaches, patterned by a light sea wrack,  
 And the ruined halcyon nests that came on shore.

Tears, in their freedom, cloud the eyes,  
 Drowsing the sense.  
 Honey and poppy equally mixed together,  
 They cannot drug away or curtain off with sleep  
 So many crowding faces,  
 Such pitiless disharmony of shapes.

## THE MOUNTAIN LAKE

Empty of heart we wait amid the snow,  
The feline snow that crouches by the lake.  
Empty of heart, except for icy fear  
Reflected from unfathomable deeps,  
Blue beyond blue, past the inverted pines,  
Past mirrored fangs laid bare against the sky,  
Past silent air, and silence in the vault,  
The iris of the mountain, hiding thought  
No human fear might hide, or love reveal  
Within the eye, lake of the human soul.

We know this presence. From the valley first  
Lifting our eyes toward the mountain wall  
We saw the morning tremble in the deep  
Where the night's constellations lay dissolved.  
We saw the sun, with cautious sword out-thrust,  
Creep with that misted blade from height to height,  
Testing ravine and bastion and crag  
With ringing blows of light. The splintered gold  
Broke gaily over forest, lanced the snow  
And melted to the valley with delight.

That visible laughter made the earth respond.  
An eagle first, immovable above  
The highest reach of alp, fluttered its pinions  
And then relapsed to stoniness in air.  
Larks and cascades competed in their song,  
Each conjuring, with throat and rock-foot pool,  
A clamour of laughter such as silver makes  
Webbed in a girl's gold hair when snaring with it  
The first desire of boyhood. From the slopes  
Below the alpine panther's drooping pads,  
The little cowslips ran like bees disturbed  
By a marauding bear. Innumerable flowers  
Lifted their heads and flung toward the sun  
Their tiny shouts of perfume, breaking together  
And deluging the valley with the riot  
Of morning-joy indistinguishable from mirth  
Of mortal lips and innocence of meadows.

And through this gaiety we took our way  
 Against the onrush from the slopes above,  
 Pageant and cavalcade of song and colour,  
 Dancing and miming of the naked mists  
 Down through the boulder-rooted woods that stood  
 Aloof and stubborn, except for the young larches  
 Who trembled, sighed, and shook their verdant hair.

But all this masquerade from dawn to noon  
 Borne down against our ascent, could not blind  
 Our eyes, nor cover the knowledge in our hearts.  
 We saw, we knew the monster of the ice,  
 The glacier, the morain of the rocks,  
 The cleft concealed with a faint feather of snow,  
 The horror of the silence in the height  
 Turning to murmur of its own despair.  
 We knew that as we climbed we should encounter  
 This powdery spirit like the breath of fear,  
 Invisible, yet glinting in the air  
 Above the peak, and shaking through sunshafts  
 Its venom of resentment on the soul  
 Of man, of eagle, lark and wild cascade,  
 The little flowers shouting to the valley,  
 Frosting them all with leper-touch of terror  
 Colder than echo, quieter than death.

RICHARD CHURCH

## THE SUNFLOWER

See, I have bent thee by thy saffron hair,  
 O most strange masker,  
 Towards my face, thy face so full of eyes,  
 O almost legendary monster.  
 Thee of the saffron, circling hair I bend,  
 Bend by my fingers knotted in thy hair,  
 Hair like broad flames.  
 So—shall I swear by beech husk, spindle-berry,  
 To break thee, saffron hair, and peering eye,  
 To have the mastery ?

PETER QUENNELL

### GLORY

Glory is of the sun, too, and the sun of suns,  
and down the shafts of his splendid pinions  
run tiny rivers of peace.

Most of his time, the tiger pads and slouches in a burning  
peace;  
And the small hawk high up turns round on the slow pivot  
of peace.  
Peace comes from behind the sun, with the peregrine falcon,  
and the owl.  
Yet all of these drink blood.

D. H. LAWRENCE

### SOLSTICES

Worship the summer sun  
In the high heavens burning,  
While the wheat-filled earth  
Ripens, slowly turning  
Her swollen sides to his beams,  
Until her body teems  
With multitudinous birth.

Worship him then, but love  
His level winter rays,  
That through shy, fireside days  
Cool and discreetly move,  
With curious, fruitless care  
Treading the inner air  
Of cavern, house, and den,  
Companion to mouse and men.

RICHARD CHURCH

I CLOSED MY EYES TO-DAY AND SAW  
 I closed my eyes to-day and saw  
     A dark land fringed with flame,  
 A sky of grey with ochre swirls  
     Down to the dark land came.  
 No wind, no sound, no man, no bird,  
     No grass, no hill, no wood :  
 Tall as a pine amid the plain  
     One giant sunflower stood.  
 Its disk was large with ripened seed :  
     A red line on the grey,  
 The flames, as yet afar, I knew  
     Would gnaw the world away.  
 In vain the seeds were ripe ; the stem,  
     With singed leaves hung around,  
 Relaxed ; and all the big flower stooped  
     And stared upon the ground.

WILLIAM FORCE STEAD

MEN FADE LIKE ROCKS  
 Rock-like the souls of men  
     Fade, fade in time.  
 Falls on worn surfaces  
     Slow chime on chime,  
 Sense, like a murmuring dew,  
     Soft sculpturing rain,  
 Or the wind that blows hollowing  
     In every lane.  
 Smooth as the stones that lie  
     Dimmed, water-worn,  
 Worn of the night and day  
     In sense forlorn.  
 Rock-like the souls of men  
     Fade, fade in time ;  
 Smoother than river-rain  
     Falls chime on chime.

W. J. TURNER

PSYCHOMETRIST

I listened to a man and he  
Had no word to say to me :  
Then unto a stone I bowed  
And it spoke to me aloud.

‘ The force that bindeth me so long,  
Once sang in the linnet’s song ;  
Now upon the ground I lie,  
While the centuries go by !

‘ Linnets shall for joy atone  
And be fastened into stone ;  
While, upon the waving tree  
Stones shall sing in ecstasy ! ’

JAMES STEPHENS

THE CAGE

Man, afraid to be alive,  
Shut his soul in senses five,  
From fields of uncreated light  
Into the crystal tower of sight,  
And from the roaring winds of space  
Into the small flesh-carven place  
Of the ear whose cave impounds  
Only small and broken sounds ;  
And to this narrow sense of touch  
From strength that held the stars in clutch ;  
And from the warm ambrosial spice  
Of flowers and fruits of Paradise  
To the frail and fitful power  
Of tongue’s and nostril’s sweet and sour.  
And toiling for a sordid wage,  
There in his self-created cage  
Ah, how safely barred is he  
From menace of eternity.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

## THE EXILE

In the dead middle of night,  
 Quiet and cold,  
 I heard the screwk of Chantecleer :  
 Three times he called.  
 It was an angry signature  
 Upon the silence scrawled.

Thrice at the frozen hour  
 He cried his crow,  
 Waking from dreams of what he was  
 Millenniums ago,  
 When, in forests of India,  
 Under a royal sun,  
 He with his wives, many and meek,  
 Lived like Solomon.

Some vestiges remain  
 Of dreams so deep :  
 Round his insulted heart  
 Sick humours creep :  
 And with his crooked crow he signs  
 The death-warrant of sleep.

GERALD BULLETT

## THE GREATER CATS

The greater cats with golden eyes  
 Stare out between the bars.  
 Deserts are there, and different skies,  
 And night with different stars.  
 They prowl the aromatic hill,  
 And mate as fiercely as they kill,  
 And hold the freedom of their will  
 To roam, to live, to drink their fill ;  
 But this beyond their wit know I :  
 Man lives a little, and for long shall die.

Their kind across the desert range  
Where tulips spring from stones,  
Not knowing they will suffer change  
Or vultures pick their bones.  
Their strength's eternal in their sight,  
They rule the terror of the night,  
They overtake the deer in flight,  
And in their arrogance they smite ;  
But I am sage, if they are strong :  
Man's love is transient as his death is long.

Yet oh what powers to deceive !  
My wit is turned to faith,  
And at this moment I believe  
In love, and scout at death.  
I came from nowhere, and shall be  
Strong, steadfast, swift, eternally :  
I am a lion, a stone, a tree,  
And as the Polar star in me  
Is fixed my constant heart on thee.  
Ah, may I stay forever blind  
With lions, tigers, leopards, and their kind.

VICTORIA SACKVILLE-WEST

## THE SEALS

Leave her alone,  
She is the Island's daughter.  
Sleek heads, dark heads  
Are risen from the water :  
Leave her the company  
Her songs have brought her.

The old gray music doctors  
 Of the ocean,  
 Their holy, happy eyes  
 Shining devotion,  
 Applaud and blow  
 In foam and soft commotion.

It is her hour,  
 The Island's only daughter.  
 The dark, sleek heads  
 Are risen from the water :  
 Leave her the company  
 Her songs have brought her.

L. A. G. STRONG

#### DEATH

Nor dread nor hope attend  
 A dying animal ;  
 A man awaits his end  
 Dreaming and hoping all ;  
 Many times he died,  
 Many times rose again.  
 A great man in his pride  
 Confronting murderous men  
 Casts derision upon  
 Supersession of breath ;  
 He knows death to the bone—  
 Man has created death.

W. B. YEATS

## THE SIGNATURE OF PAIN

Open the breast :

Heart, physical heart, that mourns in tremours, take it.  
Swear to discover the small drop of fire  
That makes the body bitter.

Oh, volatile pain !

Regions of earth can offer you no foothold,  
Being so gross-compacted. Hosts of heaven,  
Invisible spirits from the invisible glory,  
Figure the earth to strange intelligence,  
Themselves unbodied, bodilessly discerned.  
These are the powers of beauty and deep wisdom ;  
And pain not least among the hosts of heaven.

Yet if a man should say, ‘ Here’s pain, here’s pain !  
See by that impress, wind-mark, signature,  
By inmost spirit fretting the mind and flesh,  
By nature made articulate—see where pain

Reveals the vesture of her divinity.

Follow within. Consider how she broods,  
Not perishably born to time and space ;  
Pain everlasting, the true self of pain.

Mortals, dismembered into time, conceive  
The motion of her presence fragmentary,  
With generation, flowering, and decay.

In her own royalty she is pure and constant.  
She is the fire that burns within the waters,  
Breathes, and by music of its breath creates  
Dancing and trembling in the elements.

And, heart, you touch her closest of all creatures :  
So by the terror of that altitude  
The body melts, grows bitter, and cries peace’—

If a man sees, and worships, and speaks true,  
Anatomists hurry busily to confute him ;  
Put on clean aprons ; carve a thousand corpses ;  
Press out the sap, refine, precipitate ;  
Till through the thin and crystal walls there shine  
Snowflakes and flowers and diamonds of death.

'In the first flask'—an eloquent old greybeard,  
 Wagging his nose between a thumb and finger—  
 'I caught the pain of new-invented airs,  
 Which if a man should breathe he gripes and throttles  
 And calls out foolish words. And here are fevers,  
 Pin-pricks and bullet-wounds and running sores,  
 Cauteries, amputations. . . . Next to these  
 Are all the slights that can befall the soul,  
 As love despised, the marriage-bed betrayed,  
 Torture of conscience, loss of friends and health'—

Oh, Sir,  
 This is the *caput mortuum* of pain.  
 Perhaps your splinters have a power to prickle ;  
 To rend the heart ; to open out abysses ;  
 To conjure demons—I believe it true.  
 They are not pain, for pain is spiritual,  
 Discerned by spirit, and her signature  
 Known by the eyes of flesh when spirit has known her.  
 The inoffensive shining of the sun  
 Bears witness that he gave her habitation ;  
 For not alone in strength he goes, but peace  
 Follows his footsteps, and a fostering care.  
 Even in the shell he comforts the small bird ;  
 Who speaks up manfully and issues forth  
 To a new world, rejoicing in the sun,  
 Standing and straddling over the green turf.

If there is understanding, there she walked,  
 A holy guest. If gentleness and truth,  
 She gave her blessing. Every countenance  
 That warms and lights the heart of the beholder  
 Shews, clear and true, the signature of pain.

## THE BOTTLE

Of green and hexagonal glass,  
With sharp, fluted sides—  
Vaguely transparent these walls,  
Wherein motionless hides  
A simple so potent it can  
To oblivion lull  
The weary, the racked, the bereaved,  
The miserable.

Flowers in silent desire  
Their life-breath exhale—  
Self-heal, hellebore, aconite  
Chamomile, dwale :  
Sharing the same gentle heavens,  
The sun's heat and light,  
And, in the dust of their roots,  
The same shallow night.

Each its own livelihood hath,  
Shape, pattern, hue ;  
Age on to age unto these  
Keeping steadfastly true ;  
And, musing amid them, there moves  
A stranger, named Man,  
Who of their ichor distils  
What virtue he can ;

Plucks them ere seed-time to blazon  
His house with their radiant dyes ;  
Prisons their attar in wax ;  
Candies their petals ; denies  
Them freedom to breed in their wont ;  
Buds, fecundates, grafts them at will ;  
And with cunningest leechcraft compels  
Their good to his ill.

Intrigue fantastic as this  
Where shall we find ?  
Mute in their beauty they serve him,  
Body and mind.

And one—but a weed in his wheat—  
 Is the poppy—frail, pallid, whose juice  
 With its saplike and opiate fume  
 Strange dreams will induce

Of wonder and horror. And none  
 Can silence the soul,  
 Wearied of self and of life,  
 Earth's darkness and dole,  
 More secretly, deeply. But finally?—  
 Waste not thy breath;  
 The words that are scrawled on this phial  
 Have for synonym, *death*—  
 Wicket out into the dark  
 That swings but one way;  
 Infinite hush in an ocean of silence  
 Æons away—  
 Thou forsaken!—even thou!—  
 The dread good-bye;  
 The abandoned, the thronged, the watched, the  
 unshared—  
 Awaiting me—I!

WALTER DE LA MARE

#### GHOSTS

Can they still live,  
 Beckon and cry  
 Over the years  
 After they die  
 Bringing us grief,  
 Bringing us tears?

Those we once set  
 With us abreast

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So while they sleep  
Do they not trust  
Friendship to keep  
Memory bright  
Lest it fall quite  
Into the dust ?

Ah, but they try  
That to retain  
Lest they should die  
Over again.

• • •  
What idle cast  
Angled his name  
Out of dead seas,  
So that the past  
Stripped of its ease  
Filled me with shame ?

Out of what space  
Echoed his laughter  
Back to my ear ?  
Whence rose his face  
Friendly and near  
All this time after ?

I had been reading.  
Rapt, never heeding  
How the light crept  
Out of the room ;  
Almost I slept,  
Lulled by the gloom.

And did I brood ?  
No, free from care,  
Doubt, or desire—  
Such was my mood  
Sunk in a chair  
Close to the fire.

Almost I slept . . .  
Loosely sleep's cords  
Over me slipped  
Tautened and twined . . .  
Then came his words.  
Back to my mind.

Gently they stole  
Wave upon wave  
Drawing my soul  
Down to his grave :  
' You will forget . . .'  
You will forget . . .'

Then came his eyes  
Shining with truth ;  
Then came his voice  
Broken with sighs ;  
Friend of my choice,  
Friend of my youth.

Ah, but I burned  
Him to embrace,  
Feeling his breath  
Hot on my face  
So that I yearned  
Almost to death ;

So that I reeled  
Free from sleep's fetters  
Out of my chair  
Groping to where  
I had concealed  
Certain old letters.

Holding a candle  
Over my head  
Thrust I aside  
Many a bundle  
Labelled and tied  
Seeking my dead ;

Hearing him yet  
Saying 'Goodbye' ;  
Hearing his sigh  
Murmured so low :  
‘ Ah, but I know  
You will forget.’

Almost distraught,  
Kneeling I sought  
Rummaged and fumbled  
Straining my eyes :  
Then my hand stumbled  
On to my prize ;  
Buried like him,  
Withering under  
Many an ashen  
Fancy as dim,  
Drained of its wonder,  
Emptied of passion . . .

So that I wept ;  
Strong as a tide  
Bitterness swept  
Over my head :  
I had not cried  
When he was dead . . .

• • •  
How came this shade  
Begging, unbidden  
Back to my mind,  
Bringing behind  
Pain long allayed  
Pleasure forgotten ?

Ah, but they live,  
Beckon and cry  
Over the years  
After they die  
Bringing us grief,  
Bringing us tears.

## TO A CHILD IN DEATH

You would have scoffed if we had told you yesterday

Love made us feel, or so it was with me, like some great  
bird

Trying to hold and shelter you in its strong wing ;—  
A gay little shadowy smile would have tossed us back such a  
solemn word,

And it was not for that you were listening

When so quietly you slipped away  
With half the music of the world unheard.

What shall we do with this strange summer, meant for you,—  
Dear, if we see the winter through,  
What shall be done with spring ?

This, this is the victory of the Grave ; here is death's sting,  
That it is not strong enough, our strongest wing.

But what of His who like a Father pitied ?

His Son was also, once, a little thing,  
The wistfullest child that ever drew breath,  
Chased by a sword from Bethlehem and in the busy house at  
Nazareth

Playing with little rows of nails, watching the carpenter's  
hammer swing,

Long years before His hands and feet were tied  
And by a hammer and the three great nails He died,

    Of Youth, of Spring,  
Of sorrow, of loneliness, of victory the King,  
    Under the shadow of that wing.

CHARLOTTE MEW

## GIORNO DEI MORTI

Along the avenue of cypresses,  
All in their scarlet cloaks and surplices  
Of linen, go the chanting choristers,  
The priests in gold and black, the villagers . . .

And all along the path to the cemetery  
The round dark heads of men crowd silently,

And black-scarved faces of womenfolk, wistfully  
Watch at the banner of death, and the mystery.

And at the foot of a grave a father stands  
With sunken head, and forgotten, folded hands ;  
And at the foot of a grave a mother kneels  
With pale shut face, nor either hears nor feels

The coming of the chanting choristers  
Between the avenue of cypresses,  
The silence of the many villagers,  
The candle-flames beside the surplices.

D. H. LAWRENCE

#### DEATH MAY BE . . .

Death may be very gentle after all :  
He turns his face away from arrogant knights  
Who fling themselves against him in their fights ;  
But to the loveliest he loves to call.  
And he has with him those whose ways were mild  
And beautiful ; and many a little child.

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

#### THE ATONEMENT

One died upon a lonely Cross  
—Lonely enough with two beside.  
Dear, that was your loss and my loss,  
And it was there we died.  
O past the scope of hand's compelling,  
Past the cunning of the eyes,  
Past the noose that thought, rebelling,  
Flings to snare the skies,  
His love reached out to every part,  
And taught his fellows to atone,  
And broke my heart and broke your heart,  
And would not let him die alone.

GERALD GOULD

## THE HOLLOW MEN

*Mistah Kurtz—he dead  
A penny for the Old Guy*

## I

We are the hollow men  
 We are the stuffed men  
 Leaning together  
 Headpiece filled with straw. Alas !  
 Our dried voices, when  
 We whisper together  
 Are quiet and meaningless  
 As wind in dry grass  
 Or rats' feet over broken glass  
 In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,  
 Paralysed force, gesture without motion ;

Those who have crossed  
 With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom  
 Remember us—if at all—not as lost  
 Violent souls, but only  
 As the hollow men  
 The stuffed men.

## II

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams  
 In death's dream kingdom  
 These do not appear :  
 There, the eyes are  
 Sunlight on a broken column  
 There, is a tree swinging  
 And voices are  
 In the wind's singing  
 More distant and more solemn  
 Than a fading star.

Let me be no nearer  
In death's dream kingdom  
Let me also wear  
Such deliberate disguises  
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves  
In a field  
Behaving as the wind behaves  
No nearer—

Not that final meeting  
In the twilight kingdom

### III

This is the dead land  
This is cactus land  
Here the stone images  
Are raised, here they receive  
The supplication of a dead man's hand  
Under the twinkle of a fading star.

Is it like this  
In death's other kingdom  
Waking alone  
At the hour when we are  
Trembling with tenderness  
Lips that would kiss  
Form prayers to broken stone.

### IV

The eyes are not here  
There are no eyes here  
In this valley of dying stars  
In this hollow valley  
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms

In this last of meeting places  
We grope together  
And avoid speech  
Gathered on this beach of the tumid river

Sightless, unless  
 The eyes reappear  
 As the perpetual star  
 Multifoliate rose  
 Of death's twilight kingdom  
 The hope only  
 Of empty men.

## V

*Here we go round the prickly pear  
 Prickly pear prickly pear  
 Here we go round the prickly pear  
 At five o'clock in the morning.*

Between the idea  
 And the reality  
 Between the motion  
 And the act  
 Falls the Shadow

*For Thine is the Kingdom*

Between the conception  
 And the creation  
 Between the emotion  
 And the response  
 Falls the Shadow

*Life is very long*

Between the desire  
 And the spasm  
 Between the potency  
 And the existence  
 Between the essence  
 And the descent  
 Falls the Shadow

*For Thine is the Kingdom*

For thine is  
 Life is  
 For Thine is the

*This is the way the world ends  
 This is the way the world ends  
 This is the way the world ends  
 Not with a bang but a whimper.*

T. S. ELIOT

## THE UNFORTUNATE MILLER

On windy days the mill  
Turned with a will,  
But on calm days it spread  
Its four sails—dead.

The one-eyed miller man  
Laments that ban,  
And to the windless sky  
Turning his vexed eye :

‘ God help,’ he sadly says,  
‘ This business ;  
A hundred days and more  
The wind’s forbore,

‘ And lacking breezes I  
Am bound to die ;  
The profit I’ve forgone  
In offal and grist alone

‘ Would have bought a cock and a hen,  
A gilt for my pen,  
And a row of asters planted  
Just where I wanted ;

‘ But since the wind is still—  
The devil take the mill !  
Never it rains but pours—  
Let’s in-a-doors.’

So in-a-doors goes he  
To see—alas to see—  
Not the scrapings of pan or pot  
In his famished cot.

The tap of the clock indoors,  
The dusty floors,  
His empty crock and purse,  
Made bad seem worse.

He looked at himself in the glass—  
 So thin he was !  
 He looked at the time and date—  
 Too late ! Too late !  
 And creeping again to the mill  
 That stood stone still,  
 He tied round his neck the loop  
 Of a long dark rope,  
 Drove a tenpenny nail  
 Into the mill's black sail,  
 Hung his watch on a shelf,  
 Then hung himself.  
 And lo, the wind came ! Beshrew,  
 How the wind blew !  
 And the sails, with the miller dying,  
 Went flying, flying.

A. E. COPPARD

## NOBODY

Nobody, ancient mischief, nobody,  
 Harasses always with an absent body.  
 Nobody coming up the road, nobody,  
 Like a tall man in a dark cloak, nobody.  
 Nobody about the house, nobody,  
 Like children creeping up the stairs, nobody.  
 Nobody anywhere in the garden, nobody,  
 Like a young girl quiet with needlework, nobody.  
 Nobody coming, nobody, not yet here,  
 Incessantly welcomed by the wakeful ear.  
 Until this nobody shall consent to die,  
 Under his curse must every man lie—  
 The curse of his jealousy, of his grief and fright,  
 Of sudden rape and murder screamed in the night.

ROBERT GRAVES

## BELEAGUERED CITIES

Build your houses, build your houses, build your towns,  
 Fell the woodland, to a gutter turn the brook,  
 Pave the meadows, pave the meadows, pave the downs,  
 Plant your bricks and mortar where the grasses shook,  
 The wind-swept grasses shook.

Build, build your Babels black against the sky—  
 But mark yon small green blade, your stones between,  
 The single spy  
 Of that uncounted host you have outcast ;  
 For with their tiny pennons waving green  
 They shall storm your streets at last.

Build your houses, build your houses, build your slums,  
 Drive your drains where once the rabbits used to lurk,  
 Let there be no song there save the wind that hums  
 Through the idle wires while dumb men tramp to work,  
 Tramp to their idle work.  
 Silent the siege ; none notes it ; yet one day  
 Men from your walls shall watch the woods once more  
 Close round their prey.  
 Build, build the ramparts of your giant-town ;  
 Yet they shall crumble to the dust before  
 The battering thistle-down.

F. L. LUCAS

## THE RUIN

Gone are the coloured princes, gone echo, gone laughter :  
 Drips the blank roof : and the moss creeps after.

Dead is the crumbled chimney : all mellowed to rotting  
 The wall-tints, and the floor-tints, from the spotting  
 Of the rain, from the wind and slow appetite  
 Of patient mould : and of the worms that bite  
 At beauty all their innumerable lives.



## SAILING TO BYZANTIUM

That is no country for old men. The young  
In one another's arms ; birds in the trees,  
—Those dying generations—at their song ;  
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,  
Fish, flesh or fowl, commend all summer long  
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.  
Caught in that sensual music all neglect  
Monuments of unageing intellect.

An aged man is but a paltry thing,  
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless  
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing  
For every tatter in its mortal dress,  
Nor is there singing school but studying  
Monuments of its own magnificence ;  
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come  
To the holy city of Byzantium.

O sages standing in God's holy fire  
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,  
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,  
And be the singing-masters of my soul.  
Consume my heart away ; sick with desire  
And fastened to a dying animal  
It knows not what it is ; and gather me  
Into the artifice of eternity.

Once out of nature I shall never take  
My bodily form from any natural thing,  
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make  
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling  
To keep a drowsy emperor awake ;  
Or set upon a golden bough to sing  
To lords and ladies of Byzantium  
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

## GERONTION

*Thou hast nor youth nor age  
But as it were an after dinner sleep  
Dreaming of both.*

Here I am, an old man, in a dry month,  
Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain.  
I was neither at the hot gates  
Nor fought in the warm rain  
Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass,  
Bitten by flies, fought.  
My house is a decayed house,  
And the jew squats on the window sill, the owner,  
Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp,  
Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London.  
The goat coughs at night in the field overhead ;  
Rocks, moss, stoncrop, iron, merds.  
The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea,  
Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter.

I an old man,  
A dull head among windy spaces.

Signs are taken for wonders. ‘ We would see a sign ! ’  
The word within a word, unable to speak a word,  
Swaddled with darkness. In the juvescence of the year  
Came Christ the tiger

In depraved May, dogwood and chestnut, flowering judas,  
To be eaten, to be divided, to be drunk  
Among whispers ; by Mr. Silvero  
With caressing hands, at Limoges  
Who walked all night in the next room ;  
By Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians ;  
By Madame de Tornquist, in the dark room  
Shifting the candles ; Fräulein von Kulp  
Who turned in the hall, one hand on the door. Vacant  
shuttles  
Weave the wind. I have no ghosts  
An old man in a draughty house  
Under a windy knob.

After such knowledge, what forgiveness ? Think now  
History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors  
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,  
Guides us by vanities. Think now

She gives when our attention is distracted  
And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions  
That the giving famishes the craving. Gives too late  
What's not believed in, or if still believed,  
In memory only, reconsidered passion. Gives too soon  
Into weak hands, what's thought can be dispensed with  
Till the refusal propagates a fear. Think  
Neither fear nor courage saves us. Unnatural vices  
Are fathered by our heroisms. Virtues  
Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes.  
These tears are shaken from the wrath-bearing tree.

The tiger springs in the new year. Us he devours. Think  
at last

We have not reached conclusion, when I  
Stiffen in a rented house. Think at last  
I have not made this show purposelessly  
And it is not by any concitation  
Of the backward devils.

I would meet you upon this honestly.  
I that was near your heart was removed therefrom  
To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.  
I have lost my passion : why should I need to keep it  
Since what is kept must be adulterated ?  
I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch :  
How should I use them for your closer contact ?

These with a thousand small deliberations  
Protract the profit of their chilled delirium,  
Excite the membrane, when the sense has cooled,  
With pungent sauces, multiply variety  
In a wilderness of mirrors. What will the spider do,  
Suspend its operations, will the weevil  
Delay ? De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs. Cammel, whirled  
Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear  
In fractured atoms. Gull against the wind, in the windy  
straits

Of Belle Isle, or running on the Horn,  
 White feathers in the snow, the Gulf claims,  
 And an old man driven by the Trades  
 To a sleepy corner.

Tenants of the house,  
 Thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season.

T. S. ELIOT

THE GOLDEN ROOM

Do you remember that still summer evening  
 When, in the cosy cream-washed living-room  
 Of The Old Nailshop, we all talked and laughed—  
 Our neighbours from The Gallows, Catherine  
 And Lascelles Abercrombie ; Rupert Brooke ;  
 Eleanor and Robert Frost, living a while  
 At Little Iddens, who'd brought over with them  
 Helen and Edward Thomas ? In the lamplight  
 We talked and laughed ; but, for the most part, listened  
 While Robert Frost kept on and on and on,  
 In his slow New England fashion, for our delight,  
 Holding us with shrewd turns and racy quips,  
 And the rare twinkle of his grave blue eyes ?

We sat there in the lamplight, while the day  
 Died from rose-latticed casements, and the plovers  
 Called over the low meadows, till the owls  
 Answered them from the elms, we sat and talked :  
 Now, a quick flash from Abercrombie ; now,  
 A murmured dry half-heard aside from Thomas ;  
 Now, a clear laughing word from Brooke ; and then  
 Again Frost's rich and ripe philosophy,  
 That had the body and tang of good draught-cider,  
 And poured as clear a stream.

'Twas in July  
 Of nineteen-fourteen that we sat and talked ;  
 Then August brought the war, and scattered us.

Now, on the crest of an *Ægean* isle,  
 Brooke sleeps, and dreams of England : Thomas lies  
 'Neath Vimy Ridge, where he, among his fellows,  
 Died, just as life had touched his lips to song.

And nigh as ruthlessly has life divided  
 Us who survive ; for Abercrombie toils  
 In a black Northern town, beneath the glower  
 Of hanging smoke ; and in America  
 Frost farms once more ; and, far from The Old Nailshop,  
 We sojourn by the Western sea.

And yet,  
 Was it for nothing that the little room,  
 All golden in the lamplight, thrilled with golden  
 Laughter from the hearts of friends that summer night ?  
 Darkness has fallen on it ; and the shadow  
 May never more be lifted from the hearts  
 That went through those black years of war, and live.

And still, whenever men and women gather  
 For talk and laughter on a summer night,  
 Shall not that lamp rekindle ; and the room  
 Glow once again alive with light and laughter ;  
 And, like a singing star in time's abyss,  
 Burn golden-hearted through oblivion ?

WILFRID GIBSON

#### WHEN

When mine hour is come  
 Let no teardrop fall  
 And no darkness hover  
 Round me where I lie.  
 Let the vastness call  
 One who was its lover,  
 Let me breathe the sky.

Where the lordly light  
 Walks along the world,  
 And its silent tread  
 Leaves the grasses bright,  
 Leaves the flowers uncurled,  
 Let me to the dead  
 Breathe a gay good-night.

## I SIT ALONE

I sit alone,  
 And clear thoughts move in me,  
 Pictures, now near, now far,  
 Of transient fantasy.  
 Happy I am, at peace  
 In my own company.

Yet life is a dread thing, too,  
 Dark with horror and fear.  
 Beauty's fingers grow cold,  
 Sad cries I hear,  
 Death with a stony gaze  
 Is ever near.

Lost in myself I hide  
 From the cold unknown :  
 Lost, like a world cast forth  
 Into space star-sown :  
 And the songs of the morning are stilled,  
 And delight in them flown.

So even the tender and dear  
 Like phantoms through memory stray—  
 Creations of sweet desire,  
 That faith can alone bid stay :  
 They cast off the cloak of the real  
 And vanish away.

Only love can redeem  
 This truth, that delight ;  
 Bring morning to blossom again  
 Out of plague-ridden night ;  
 Restore to the lost the found,  
 To the blinded sight.

## PROMISE

Be not so desolate  
Because thy dreams have flown  
And the hall of the heart is empty  
And silent as stone,  
As age left by children  
Sad and alone.

Those delicate children,  
Thy dreams, still endure :  
All pure and lovely things  
Wend to the Pure.  
Sigh not : unto the fold  
Their way was sure.

Thy gentlest dreams, thy frailest,  
Even those that were  
Born and lost in a heart-beat,  
Shall meet thee there,  
They are become immortal  
In shining air.

The unattainable beauty  
The thought of which was pain,  
That flickered in eyes and on lips  
And vanished again :  
That fugitive beauty  
Thou shalt attain.

The lights innumerable  
That led thee on and on,  
The Masque of Time ended,  
Shall glow into one.  
It shall be with thee for ever  
Thy travel done.



IV

1930-1942

## THE STORM CONE

1932

This is the midnight—let no star  
 Delude us—dawn is very far.  
 This is the tempest long foretold—  
 Slow to make head but sure to hold.

Stand by ! The lull 'twixt blast and blast  
 Signals the storm is near, not past ;  
 And worse than present jeopardy  
 May our forlorn to-morrow be.

If we have cleared the expectant reef,  
 Let no man look for his relief.  
 Only the darkness hides the shape  
 Of further peril to escape.

It is decreed that we abide  
 The weight of gale against the tide  
 And those huge waves the outer main  
 Sends in to set us back again.

They fall and whelm. We strain to hear  
 The pulses of her labouring gear,  
 Till the deep throb beneath us proves,  
 After each shudder and check, she moves !

She moves, with all save purpose lost,  
 To make her offing from the coast ;  
 But, till she fetches open sea,  
 Let no man deem that he is free !

RUDYARD KIPLING

## AN ACRE OF GRASS

Picture and book remain,  
An acre of green grass  
For air and exercise,  
Now strength of body goes ;  
Midnight, an old house  
Where nothing stirs but a mouse.

My temptation is quiet.  
Here at life's end  
Neither loose imagination,  
Nor the mill of the mind  
Consuming its rag and bone,  
Can make the truth known.

Grant me an old man's frenzy,  
Myself must I remake  
Till I am Timon and Lear  
Or that William Blake  
Who beat upon the wall  
Till Truth obeyed his call ;

A mind Michael Angelo knew  
That can pierce the clouds,  
Or inspired by frenzy  
Shake the dead in their shrouds ;  
Forgotten else by mankind,  
An old man's eagle mind.

W. B. :

## THE OLD MEN

We old men,  
We are not what we seem  
As we go down the street.

In our old eyes  
Shine boyhood memories :  
We have seen horses swerve,  
And vessels sail,  
We know the crimson curve  
Upon a young girl's cheek.

When we wake at end of night,  
We draw a deeper breath  
And hail the Lord of Light.  
We are not what we seem,  
We are not afraid of death  
As we go down the street.

ERNEST RHYS

## WHEN I'M ALONE

'*When I'm alone*'—the words tripped off his tongue  
As though to be alone were nothing strange.  
'*When I was young*,' he said ; '*when I was young . . .*'

I thought of age, and loneliness, and change.  
I thought how strange we grow when we're alone,  
And how unlike the selves that meet, and talk,  
And blow the candles out, and say good-night.  
*Alone . . .* The word is life endured and known.  
It is the stillness where our spirits walk  
And all but inmost faith is overthrown.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

## FULL MOON

As I walked out that sultry night,  
 I heard the stroke of one.  
 The moon, attained to her full height,  
 Stood beaming like the sun :  
 She exorcised the ghostly wheat  
 To mute assent in love's defeat,  
 Whose tryst had now begun.

The fields lay sick beneath my tread,  
 A tedious owlet cried,  
 A nightingale above my head  
 With this or that replied—  
 Like man and wife who nightly keep  
 Inconsequent debate in sleep  
 As they dream side by side.

Your phantom wore the moon's cold mask,  
 My phantom wore the same ;  
 Forgetful of the feverish task  
 In hope of which they came,  
 Each image held the other's eyes  
 And watched a grey distraction rise  
 To cloud the eager flame—

To cloud the eager flame of love,  
 To fog the shining gate ;  
 They held the tyrannous queen above  
 Sole mover of their fate,  
 They glared as marble statues glare  
 Across the tessellated stair  
 Or down the halls of state.

And now warm earth was Arctic sea,  
 Each breath came dagger-keen ;  
 Two bergs of glinting ice were we,  
 The broad moon sailed between ;  
 There swam the mermaids, tailed and finned,  
 And love went by upon the wind  
 As though it had not been.

## A SONG FOR SIMEON

Lord, the Roman hyacinths are blooming in bowls and  
The winter sun creeps by the snow hills ;  
The stubborn season has made stand.

My life is light, waiting for the death wind,  
Like a feather on the back of my hand.

Dust in sunlight and memory in corners  
Wait for the wind that chills towards the dead land.

Grant us thy peace.

I have walked many years in this city,  
Kept faith and fast, provided for the poor,  
Have given and taken honour and ease.

There went never any rejected from my door.

Who shall remember my house, where shall live my children's  
children

When the time of sorrow is come ?

They will take to the goat's path, and the fox's home,  
Fleeing from the foreign faces and the foreign swords.

Before the time of cords and scourges and lamentation  
Grant us thy peace.

Before the stations of the mountain of desolation,  
Before the certain hour of maternal sorrow,  
Now at this birth season of decease,  
Let the Infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken Word,  
Grant Israel's consolation  
To one who has eighty years and no to-morrow.

According to thy word.

They shall praise Thee and suffer in every generation  
With glory and derision,

Light upon light, mounting the saints' stair.

Not for me the martyrdom, the ecstasy of thought and prayer,  
Not for me the ultimate vision.

Grant me thy peace.

(And a sword shall pierce thy heart,  
Thine also).

I am tired with my own life and lives of those after me,  
I am dying in my own death, and the deaths of those after me.  
Let thy servant depart  
Having seen thy salvation.

T. S. ELIOT

## SISSINGHURST

A tired swimmer in the waves of time  
I throw my hands up : let the surface close :  
Sink down through centuries to another clime,  
And buried find the castle and the rose.

Buried in time and sleep,  
So drowsy, overgrown,  
That here the moss is green upon the stone,  
And lichen stains the keep.

I've sunk into an image, water-drowned,  
Where stirs no wind and penetrates no sound,  
Illusive, fragile to a touch, remote,  
Foundered within the well of years as deep  
As in the waters of a stagnant moat.  
Yet in and out of these decaying halls  
I move, and not a ripple, not a quiver,  
Shakes the reflection though the waters shiver,—  
My tread is to the same illusion bound.  
Here, tall and damask as a summer flower,  
Rise the brick gable and the springing tower ;

Invading Nature crawls  
With ivied fingers over rosy walls,  
Searching the crevices,  
Clasping the mullion, riveting the crack,  
Binding the fabric crumbling to attack,  
And questing feelers of the wandering fronds  
Grope for interstices,  
Holding this myth together under-seas,  
Anachronistic vagabonds !

And here, by birthright far from present fashion,  
As no disturber of the mirrored trance  
I move, and to the world above the waters  
Wave my incognisance.

For here, where days and years have lost their number,  
I let a plummet down in lieu of date,  
And lose myself within a slumber  
Submerged, elate.

For now the apple ripens, now the hop,  
 And now the clover, now the barley-crop ;  
 Spokes bound upon a wheel forever turning,  
 Wherewith I turn, no present manner learning ;  
 Cry neither ' Speed your processes ! ' nor ' Stop ! '  
 I am content to leave the world awry  
 (Busy with politic perplexity,)  
 If still the cart-horse at the fall of day  
 Clumps up the lane to stable and to hay,  
 And tired men go home from the immense

Labour and life's expense

That force the harsh recalcitrant waste to yield  
 Corn and not nettles in the harvest-field ;  
 This husbandry, this castle, and this I

Moving within the deeps,

Shall be content within our timeless spell,  
 Assembled fragments of an age gone by,  
 While still the sower sows, the reaper reaps,  
 Beneath the snowy mountains of the sky,  
 And meadows dimple to the village bell.  
 So plods the stallion up my evening lane  
 And fills me with a mindless deep repose,

Wherein I find in chain

The castle, and the pasture, and the rose.

Beauty, and use, and beauty once again  
 Link up my scattered heart, and shape a scheme  
 Commensurate with a frustrated dream.

The autumn bonfire smokes across the woods  
 And reddens in the water of the moat ;  
 As red within the water burns the scythe,  
 And the moon dwindled to her gibbous tithe  
 Follows the sunken sun afloat.

Green is the eastern sky and red the west ;  
 The hop-kilns huddle under pallid hoods ;  
 The waggon stupid stands with upright shaft,  
 As daily life accepts the night's arrest.  
 Night like a deeper sea engulfs the land,  
 The castle, and the meadows, and the farm ;

Only the baying watch-dog looks for harm,  
And shakes his chain towards the lunar brand.

In the high room where tall the shadows tilt  
As candle flames blow crooked in the draught,  
The reddened sunset on the panes was spilt,  
But now as black as any nomad's tent  
The night-time and night of time have blent  
Their darkness, and the waters doubly sleep.  
Over my head the years and centuries sweep,  
    The years of childhood flown,  
    The centuries unknown ;  
I dream ; I do not weep.

VICTORIA SACKVILLE-WEST

#### A SUNDAY

A child in the Sabbath peace, there—  
Down by the full-bosomed river ;  
Sun on the tide-way, flutter of wind,  
Water-cluck,—Ever . . . for ever . . .

Time itself seemed to cease there—  
The domed, hushed city behind me ;  
Home how distant ! The morrow would come—  
But here, no trouble could find me.

A respite, a solacing, deep as the sea,  
Was mine. Will it come again ? . . . Never ? . . .  
Shut in the Past is that Sabbath peace, there—  
Down by the full-bosomed river.

WALTER DE LA MARE

## THE STRAWBERRY PLANT

Above the water, in her rocky niche,  
She sat enthroned and perfect ; for her crown  
One bud, like pearl, and then two fairy roses  
Blanched and yet ardent in their glowing hearts :  
One greenish berry spangling into yellow  
Where the light touched the seed : one fruit achieved  
And ripe, an odorous vermillion ball  
Tight with completion, lovingly clasped  
By the close cup whose green chimed with the red,  
And showered with drops of gold like Danae :  
Three lovely sister leaves as like as peas,  
Young but full-fledged, dark, with a little down :  
Two leaves that to a matron hue inclined ;  
And one the matriarch, that dressed in gold  
And flushed with wine, thought her last days her best.  
And here and there a diamond of dew  
Beamed coolly from the white, smiled from the gold,  
Silvered the down, struck lightning from the red.  
The overhanging rock forbade the sun,  
Yet was she all alike with water-gleams  
Reflected, like the footlights at a play :  
Perfection's self, and (rightly) out of reach.

RUTH PITTER

## EARTHFAST

Architects plant their imagination, weld their poems on rock,  
clamp them to the skidding rim of the world and anchor  
them down to its core ;  
leave more than the poet's or painter's snail-bright trail on a  
friable leaf ;  
can build their chrysalis round them—stand in their sculp-  
ture's belly.

They see through stone, they cage and partition air, they  
crossrig space  
with footholds, planks for a dance ; yet their maze, their  
flying trapeze  
is pinned to the centre. They write their euclidean music  
standing  
with a hand on a cornice of cloud, themselves set fast,  
earth-square.

A. S. J. TESSIMOND

## GORSE

O fickle as the heart of May,  
Was the gorse once so fair ?  
Who climbed the hill at break of day  
To see it flashing there ?  
Who cut a sprig which far away  
Haunted the air ?

I cut a sprig, but when the moon  
Grew paper-thin and wan,  
Its scent declined like an old tune  
Half lost, but lingering on ;  
Or like those words now fresh, but soon  
Faded and gone.

HELEN FOLEY

## DUCHESS

The trace-horse, watch her move ;  
 She takes the hill as a ship,  
 Figure-head noble,  
 Devours the steepening wave.  
 Forehead of midnight caught  
 In a brass net she coins the light ;  
 Might sleeked with sweat,  
 A shoulder firm as marble ;  
 Watch her, the great feet grip  
 Our ground-swell earth, all's set  
 For home now, tackle taut ;  
 She leans to the work soberly, with love.

Earth dimmed, she wears the dark ;  
 The last load brushing a star,  
 Rocks into haven,  
 Sheds whispering in its wake  
 Lavender leavings, rich moon catch  
 Too rare to touch ;  
 Glint hands unhitch  
 Moth horses silverly graven.  
 Look at her, gloaming fur  
 Rope-rough she roams, a witch ;  
 Yonder what cobweb leech  
 Is milking the pond stealthily black.

The stark days, soon they come ;  
 An old mare under the hedge,  
 Rump to the blizzard,  
 Is carved on the year's tomb.  
 Wind-bitten Duchess, breast  
 Frost-laced she glows august,  
 Knows winter's worst,  
 Lean havoc, storm-shock hazard.  
 Leave her to rust, nor grudge  
 This yoke-proud labourer lost ;  
 Scored flank December-fleeced  
 She conjures the snow softly into bloom.

## MARCH HARES

I made myself as a tree,  
No withered leaf twirling on me ;  
No, not a bird that stirred my boughs,  
As looking out from wizard brows  
I watched those lithe and lovely forms  
That raised the leaves in storms.

I watched them leap and run,  
Their bodies hollowed in the sun  
To thin transparency,  
That I could clearly see  
The shallow colour of their blood  
Joyous in love's full flood.

I was content enough  
Watching that serious game of love,  
That happy hunting in the wood  
Where the pursuer was the more pursued,  
To stand in breathless hush  
With no more life myself than tree or bush.

ANDREW YOUNG

## CATS

Cats no less liquid than their shadows  
Offer no angles to the wind.  
They slip, diminished, neat, through loopholes  
Less than themselves ; will not be pinned  
To rules or routes for journeys ; counter  
Attack with non-resistance ; twist  
Enticing through the curving fingers  
And leave an angered, empty fist.  
They wait obsequious as darkness  
Quick to retire, quick to return ;  
Admit no aim or ethics ; flatter  
With reservations ; will not learn  
To answer to their names ; are seldom  
Truly owned till shot or skinned.  
Cats, no less liquid than their shadows  
Offer no angles to the wind.

A. S. J. TESSIMOND

## THE MOTHS

The narrow paths beside the flower-beds run,  
 Filled full with flowers by the autumn sun,  
 And the flint wall still casts a shadowy light  
 Although the blue September day is done.

Among the flowers, soft blurs of misty white  
 Poised steady on their slow vibrating flight,  
 Late summer's moths, that face the shortening days,  
 Dance through the chilled mists of the autumn night.

The darkness deepens still. Clouds hide the sky,  
 And on the pond the moorhens splash and cry  
 With their wild voices of an unknown world.  
 Crunching the flints, a shepherd passes by.

The smoking lantern throws its moving rays  
 Across the orchard, and the warm light plays  
 On all the silver undersides of leaves  
 Of pear and apple trees beside the ways.

The lantern closes, leaves an instant's dark,  
 Then lights the brown beads on the pear tree's bark  
 And the drugged moths, with softly quivering wings  
 Or drowsy, like some lechered knot or mark.

The night, from depths of wood and fields, may bring  
 Strange, unknown, painted moths, and anything  
 May be revealed within that splash of light,  
 Pale wainscot, crimson of red underwing.

And so, from tree to tree, the garden round,  
 The night dead quiet, and the only sound  
 A hunting owl across the rush-grown field,  
 The thud of apples falling to the ground.

## THE LOOKER-ON

. . . And ladders leaning against damson trees,  
And idle spades beside old garden walls,  
And broken sickles covered up in leaves,  
And baskets wet with dew, waist deep in grass,  
And spider webs across half-open gates . . .

And memory of a moon, a giant rolling,  
And, brown in moon's noonday, prolific oaks,  
Glint of moonsilver on their solid acorns . . .

And a fierce sun melting the fringed horizon,  
Cold grass, hard apples fallen and forgotten,  
And dew-logged thistledown . . . And crackling beechmast,  
And plump matt mushrooms—beggars' harvest—white  
As chalk, bland as a nut, and pink to break . . .

And bonfire incense, and bracken gold as beech,  
And bearded hedges, latest blackberries,  
Half-ploughed stubble and dusty threshing yards,  
And early nights, cloud multitudes on fire . . .  
Dry noons, drenched dawns, deep scents, bright stars, lost  
thoughts . . .

And empty orchards and wide open fields,  
And robin solos in deserted woods,  
And chimney smoke, and starry candlelight,  
And far-off fields, and distance like the past,  
And mossy silence, and the scent of leisure,  
And spider webs across half-open gates,  
And broken sickles buried under leaves,  
And idle spades beside old garden walls,  
And ladders leaning against damson trees, . . .

FRANK KENDON

## AUTUMN

I love to see, when leaves depart,  
 The clear anatomy arrive,  
 Winter, the paragon of art,  
 That kills all forms of life and feeling  
 Save what is pure and will survive.

Already now the clanging chains  
 Of geese are harnessed to the moon :  
 Stripped are the great sun-clouding planes :  
 And the dark pines, their own revealing,  
 Let in the needles of the noon.

Strained by the gale the olives whiten  
 Like hoary wrestlers beat with toil  
 And, with the vines, their branches lighten  
 To brim our vats where summer lingers  
 In the red froth and sun-gold oil.

Soon on our hearth's reviving pyre  
 Their rotted stems will crumble up :  
 And like a ruby, panting fire,  
 The grape will redden on your fingers  
 Through the lit crystal of the cup.

ROY CAMPBELL

## THE DISCOVERY

Once I found riches here,  
 Hidden and snugged with shadowy craft :  
 So startling quiet, my very stare  
 Seemed a delectable theft.

Now with the rags of leaf  
 There moulders in the rain and sun,  
 Thrown slant and thorn-impaled, a sheaf  
 Of twigs and floats of down :

The ruins of a nest,  
 Last spring a home from the weather, rich  
 With love when that small wayside breast  
 Brooded its heavenly clutch.

STANLEY SNAITH

## THE STOCKDOVES

They rose up in a twinkling cloud  
And wheeled about and bowed  
To settle on the trees  
Perching like small clay images.

Then with a noise of sudden rain  
They clattered off again  
And over Ballard Down  
They circled like a flying town.

Though one could sooner blast a rock  
Than scatter that dense flock  
That through the winter weather  
Some iron rule has held together,

Yet in another month from now  
Love like a spark will blow  
Those birds the country over  
To drop in trees, lover by lover.

ANDREW YOUNG

## THE SWANS

Only to those who have climbed the dusky hill  
To watch the simple contortions of the land  
At evening, a beautiful and calm apparel  
For our thought, and the mature light  
Fallen slanting among trees, shaping them  
Palpably, the thought itself the richness  
And the consistence of sensitive life ;

Only then at last in the moment ordained  
 By cast of beauty, the swans come : silverly skeined  
 Above the water's deepened animation,  
 Their hard unplaceable distant susurrus of wings  
 Mixing most gently with the sun-sifted birches'  
 Light behaviour and the childish wind's agility.

Only then caught in the shock of wonder,  
 Folding again with easy rings, the surface  
 Of contention shows an equal image  
 Stealing white in the enclosing river's incredible silk  
 At the grey conclusion of flight,  
 The locked wings, the calmed heart.

RANDALL SWINGLER

#### GULLS

How gentle and how friendly seem  
 The bright guests of the plough,  
 Following the furrow up and down  
 And parleying as they go.

Yet of all creatures most aloof  
 Are these cliff-nurseried things,  
 Patrolling inland with the threat  
 Of tempest in their wings.

STANLEY SNAITH

## BURNING THE BEE-TREE

Lay on the fire their ancient hold,  
Which they left when the tree died :  
We threw their tower down on the mould,  
And split it open wide,  
But they had taken away their gold,  
And there was none inside.

Nothing but the embalming stain,  
And a few shards of comb,  
And a breath as of the clover-plain  
Still lingered in their home,  
With skeletons of robbers slain,  
Who had too rich a tomb.

Up sweetly on the autumn air  
Spiced funeral vapours rise :  
What do you see above, what fair  
Visions salute your eyes,  
What reverend memories repair  
The breach of centuries ?

I smell the death of song, I hear  
That fair bird's last lament ;  
I see the shades of heroes near,  
About their purple tent ;  
I see the rich, the dabbled hair,  
The damasked armour rent.

And pure, on humble air, the song  
Of love is heard to chime,  
The oak's unchanging leaves among  
In an unchanging rhyme,  
For the bees remain the same so long  
They keep no count of time.

The labour, and the bitter sting,  
The cell's meticulous range,  
Honey, which makes a perishing thing  
Immortal, do not change ;  
Life, make one couplet that I sing  
As deathless, and as strange !

## THE SCYTHE

This morning as the scythe swung in my grasp  
 I thought of the sinewy craft my fathers plied,  
 Those men whose hedgerow name has come to me,  
 Those soil-bred Yorkshiremen who fashioned snathes.  
 They lopped and barked and seasoned the leafy staff  
 To bear the blade with balance. There is a stern  
 Puritan cleanliness in a true-made scythe.  
 A scythe purges the hands of awkwardness.  
 It has its own instinct, a subtle weighting  
 That pulls it round in a rich curve of motion ;  
 And when the steel, fined to a creepy edge,  
 Rips and rings through the stalks, and the swathe sighs over,  
 And the cropped circle widens at each stroke,  
 What a singing power flows from the hands !  
 The old rhythm came smoothly to my wrist.  
 I seemed to feel my ancestry move within me.  
 For though I left their soil, I found a craft  
 Nourished with a tradition choice as theirs :  
 They toiled in wood, I curb the grain of words,  
 Both winning grace and service from what's wild.  
 Scythe and sentence share one craftsmanship.

STANLEY SNAITH

## TO MY BLACKTHORN STICK

When sap ebbed low and your green days were over—  
 Hedging a gap to rugged land,  
 Bare skinned and straight you were ; and there I broke you  
 To champion my right hand.

Well shod in bronze and lithe with hillside breeding,  
 Yet, like a snarl, you dogged my side,  
 Mailed in your tridents and flaunting out the fierceness  
 That bristled through your hide.

So armed as one, have we not shared each journey  
 On noiseless path or road of stone ;  
 O exiled brother of the flowering sloe tree,  
 Your past ways are my own.

Lonesome, like me, and song-bred on Mount Nephin,  
You, also, found that in your might  
You broke in bloom before the time of leafing  
And shocked a world with light.

But you grew shy,—eyed through by glowering twilights—  
Sharing the still of night's grey brew,  
Secret and shy, while things unseen were sighing  
Their grass tunes under you.

Manured with earth's own sweat you stretched in saplings;  
Seasoned, you cored your fruit with stone;  
Then stript in fight, your strength came out of wrestling  
All winds by winter blown.

I took that strength; my axe blow was your trumpet,  
You rose from earth, god-cleaned and strong;  
And here, as in green days you were the perch,  
You're now the prop of song.

F. R. HIGGINS

## THE FALCON AND THE DOVE

This high-caught hooded Reason broods upon my wrist,  
Fettered by a so tenuous leash of steel.  
We are bound for the myrtle marshes, many leagues away,  
And have a fair expectation of quarry.

Over the laggard dove, inclining to green boscage  
Hovers this intentional doom—till the unsullied sky receives  
A precipitation of shed feathers  
And the swifter fall of wounded wings.

Will the plain aye echo with that loud *bullallo*  
Or retain an impress of our passage?  
We have caught Beauty in a wild foray  
And now the falcon is hooded and comforted away.

HERBERT READ

## DUST

The sower trudged and swung, leaning  
 On the sinewy wind, and as he tossed,  
 The grain over the chapped furrows  
 Puffed from his hand like dust.

Dragged and riven, the upland trees  
 Went in confusion of leaf ;  
 Even the pedantic oaks  
 Bowed to that shadowy mischief.

Last autumn's skeletons ran, or lifted  
 Like a flirt of sparrows off the ground.  
 I dizzied at that tangled flight  
 And the woodland's surf-sound.

O Conqueror, stand awhile in the hills  
 Before scattering my life, I said,  
 With the dead leaves and the quick dust  
 And the thoughts out of my head.

STANLEY SNAITH

## A CHILD ASLEEP

Angel of Words, in vain I have striven with thee,  
 Nor plead a lifetime's love and loyalty ;  
 Only, with envy, bid thee watch this face,  
 That says so much,-so flawlessly,  
 And in how small a space !

WALTER DE LA MARE

## MIDNIGHT

I have thrown wide my window  
And looked upon the night,  
And seen Arcturus burning  
In chaos, proudly bright.

The powdered stars above me  
Have littered heaven's floor—  
A thousand I remember ;  
I saw a myriad more.

I have forgotten thousands  
For deep and deep between,  
My mind built up the darkness  
Of space, unheard, unseen.

I held my hands to heaven  
To hold perfection there,  
But through my fingers streaming  
Went time, as thin as air ;

And I must close my window  
And draw a decent blind  
To screen from outer darkness  
The chaos of the mind.

MICHAEL ROBERTS

## CLIO

Something so noble in that lifted brow,  
 Exchanging arrows with the morning light—  
 Even as one caught the gleam, it seemed that now  
 The day was come, imperial, out of night.  
 For she could break the dark, and lend to age  
 Outrageous youth and lover's ecstasy.  
 Spring's taunting woodlands were her heritage,  
 Song in her voice, that rang the reverie.  
 Indeed I thought the Golden Bough was hers,  
 That dropt its petals at the gate of death ;  
 And being woman, she had woman's tears  
 To break the heart, or heal it at a breath.  
 Last, in her secret self, she kept the seal  
 And soul of things—the unattainable.

ERNEST RHYS

## I THINK MYSELF TO BE ALIVE

I think myself to be alive,  
 Yet died I not that summer night .  
 When in her arms I lay ?  
 And knew indeed that joy should kill,  
 And stayed so till the day,  
 And prayed so till the day.

I think myself to be alive,  
 Now in the dying winter light  
 When winter-time has come,  
 Now pain has writhen heart and limb,  
 And the little tits are dumb,  
 The little souls are dumb.

DOROTHY WELLESLEY

## CHILDLESS

Call to the swan and bid him bring  
A blessing from his plumpy thigh  
For one that tires of whispering  
To heaven, as I.

Let that fierce eye and urgent breast  
Disparage all my tumbled shape  
Beneath the imperious webs opprest :  
From throat to nape

Slide the long neck and hissing head,  
Torment my bosom in his bill,  
Awaking all that now is dead  
To do his will.

L. A. G. STRONG

## THE BRIDE

The fight that was no fight is over,  
The uncontested victory won ;  
The conqueror, sleeping by her side,  
Forgets already what is done.

But she, a pulse of deeper being,  
Death's wakeful foe from age to age,  
In the great army of creation  
Enrols and takes her heritage.

L. A. G. STRONG

## A SON IN DECEMBER

Last March, an angel of the night,  
 Love entered with the man I love,  
 Woke me from sleep for his delight,  
 And strongly with my virtue strove ;

And I, feeling his strength of God,  
 Let him dissolve me with his fire,  
 And never suffered dearer load  
 Than pillowing his forspent desire.

Now, here, in homely-scented straw,  
 December brings me my release :  
 Racked by every breath I draw,  
 A great pain, a greater peace.

What if I cry ? A fainter cry  
 Shall more than heal this rending soon,  
 And two shall sleep, my son and I,  
 Here in the straw where lies but one.

In each black outer night of fear  
 This living love, this core of proof,  
 Binds to my thought a single star,  
 Bright and remote above the roof ;

It sets the seal of womankind—  
 A paradox of joy and pain,  
 The diamond of a yielding mind—  
 On blood of mine, my heart, my brain.

O body, whose timidity  
 Love honoured then, be iron now ;  
 Burst through this dark that threatens me ;  
 O Life, be born, I know not how !

There comes an end to pain at last ;  
 I breathe, I watch my thoughts like dreams ;  
 Sleep in my nerves, and in the vast  
 Room of the world about my limbs.

Let but this choir to silence fade.  
 Now, while I hear the stars go by,  
 Bring me the son that I have made ;  
 For he must sleep as well as I. . . .

Love dreamed, I see, of hands, and feet—  
 Small to perfection.

Do not take him ;  
 This is the last sleep we shall get !  
 He is himself. The world will wake him.

FRANK KENDON

#### CRADLE SONG

Out in the dark something complains,  
 Is it the wild dove's purr ?  
 And there a thing creeps, is it the rain  
 Eavesdropping near our door ?  
 Then sleep, sleep, my darling—  
 Sleep until the bow-legged crows  
 Walk the fields of barley.

May nothing nose the gentle birds,  
 Abroad in the crawl of night,  
 Nor the cock, with wings upon his spurs,  
 Until the peep of light ;  
 Then sleep to my long rocking ;  
 Sleep as the little winds that sleep  
 All safely in God's pocket—  
 Yes, safely in God's pocket,  
 Sleep, my darling.

F. R. HIGGINS

## THE ZULU GIRL

When in the sun the hot red acres smoulder,  
 Down where the sweating gang its labour plies,  
 A girl flings down her hoe, and from her shoulder  
 Unslings her child tormented by the flies.

She takes him to a ring of shadow pooled  
 By thorn-trees : purpled with the blood of ticks,  
 While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled,  
 Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks,

His sleepy mouth, plugged by the heavy nipple,  
 Tugs like a puppy, grunting as he feeds ;  
 Through his frail nerves her own deep languors ripple  
 Like a broad river sighing through its reeds.

Yet in that drowsy stream his flesh imbibes  
 An old unquenched unsmotherable heat—  
 The curbed ferocity of beaten tribes,  
 The sullen dignity of their defeat.

Her body looms above him like a hill  
 Within whose shade a village lies at rest,  
 Or the first cloud so terrible and still  
 That bears the coming harvest in its breast.

ROY CAMPBELL

## THE SCORPION

Limpopo and Tugela churned  
 In flood for brown and angry miles  
 Melons, maize, domestic thatch,  
 The trunks of trees and crocodiles ;

The swollen estuaries were thick  
 With flotsam, in the sun one saw  
 The corpse of a young negress bruised  
 By rocks, and rolling on the shore,

Pushed by the waves of morning, rolled,  
Impersonally among shells,  
With lolling breasts and bleeding eyes,  
And round her neck were beads and bells.

That was the Africa we knew,  
Where, wandering alone,  
We saw, heraldic in the heat,  
A scorpion on a stone.

WILLIAM PLOMER

## HORSES ON THE CAMARGUE

In the grey wastes of dread,  
The haunt of chattered gulls where nothing moves  
But in a shroud of silence like the dead,  
I heard a sudden harmony of hooves,  
And, turning, saw afar  
A hundred snowy horses unconfined,  
The silver runaways of Neptune's car  
Racing, spray-curled, like waves before the wind.  
Sons of the Mistral, fleet  
As him with whose strong gusts they love to flee,  
Who shod the flying thunders on their feet  
And plumed them with the snortings of the sea ;  
Theirs is no earthly breed  
Who only haunt the verges of the earth  
And only on the sea's salt herbage feed—  
Surely the great white breakers gave them birth.  
For when for years a slave,  
A horse of the Camargue, in alien lands,  
Should catch some far-off fragrance of the wave  
Carried far inland from his native sands,  
Many have told the tale  
Of how in fury, foaming at the rein,  
He hurls his rider ; and with lifted tail,  
With coal-red eyes and cataracting mane,  
Heading his course for home,  
Though sixty foreign leagues before him sweep,  
Will never rest until he breathes the foam  
And hears the native thunder of the deep.

But when the great gusts rise  
 And lash their anger on these arid coasts,  
 When the scared gulls career with mournful cries  
 And whirl across the waste like driven ghosts :  
 When hail and fire converge,  
 The only souls to which they strike no pain  
 Are the white-crested fillies of the surge  
 And the white horses of the windy plain.  
 Then in their strength and pride  
 The stallions of the wilderness rejoice ;  
 They feel their Master's trident in their side,  
 And high and shrill they answer to his voice.  
 With white tails smoking free,  
 Long streaming manes, and arching necks, they show  
 Their kinship to their sisters of the sea—  
 And forward hurl their thunderbolts of snow.  
 Still out of hardship bred,  
 Spirits of power and beauty and delight  
 Have ever on such frugal pastures fed  
 And loved to course with tempests through the night.

ROY CAMPBELL

#### THE SPELL OF FRANCE

Little enough of that wide country,  
 Though fascinated long,  
 Have I as yet acquired : that little  
 Is constant undersong,  
 Astonishment, rest, recognition,  
 In my life's round ;  
 And whether I will or no my silence  
 Reverts to that bright ground.

First, was it ? from the verse of poets  
 Who, intimate and shy,  
 Unveiled the squares, the fairs, the lovers  
 Under that calm blue sky,  
 I thought I won some understanding  
 Of the different lure  
 And look and consonance of life there,  
 —And those first dreams endure.

Thereafter, currented with million others  
    To history's roaring weirs,  
I still found moments, and lacked not feelings,  
    Some hours of smiles or tears,  
To taste the elixir of that country,  
    To kiss the garment's hem,  
And, hurled away no matter how fiercely,  
    To hoard more than one gem.

Thus now it comes, and from blest occasion  
    Of later date though brief,  
That some deep music from that country  
    Shakes me like a leaf,  
And the happy storm of dreams or pictures  
    Originated there  
Will occupy my whole existence  
    And seem my native air.

What else would you, could I ? Endeavour  
    To number and right-dress  
The outward tokens of this passion  
    Would be but foolishness :  
To name (though sweet the names) each city  
    And village of that dream,  
Each woodride, each château, each rampart,  
    Quarry and cliff and stream ;

To summon up lost children's laughter,  
    And farmers' terse good talks,  
Cassock and sermon in gaunt cool churches,  
    Golden past-harvest walks,  
Dry veterans garrulous at small tables,  
    Bugles and horns and bells—  
How might I by these hints create you  
    Lord of my spell of spells ?

## THOSE IMAGES

What if I bade you leave  
 The cavern of the mind ?  
 There's better exercise  
 In the sunlight and wind.

I never bade you go  
 To Moscow or to Rome.  
 Renounce that drudgery,  
 Call the Muses home.

Seek those images  
 That constitute the wild,  
 The lion and the virgin,  
 The harlot and the child.

Find in middle air  
 An eagle on the wing,  
 Recognise the five  
 That make the Muses sing.

W. B. YEATS

## SKY-WIDE AN ESTUARY

Sky-wide an estuary of light  
 Ebbs amid cloud banks out of sight.  
 At her star-anchorage shall swing  
 Earth, the old freighter, till morning.

Ride above your shadow and trim  
 Cargo till stars grow dim :  
 Weigh then from the windless river ;  
 You've a treasure to deliver.

Behold the incalculable seas  
 Change face for every cloud and breeze :  
 But a prime mover works inside,  
 The constant the integral tide.

Though black-bordered fancies vex  
You and veering moods perplex,  
Underneath's a current knowing  
Well enough what way it's going.

Stroked by their windy shadows lie  
The grainlands waving at the sky.  
That golden grace must all be shed  
To fill granaries, to make bread.

Do not grieve for beauty gone.  
Limbs that ran to meet the sun  
Lend their lightness to another ;  
Child shall recreate the mother.

CECIL DAY LEWIS

## THOUGH BODIES ARE APART

Though bodies are apart,  
The dark hours so confine  
And fuse our hearts, sure, death  
Will find no way between.

Narrow this hour, that bed ;  
But room for us to explore  
Pain's long-drawn equator,  
The farthest ice of fear.

Storm passes east, recurs :  
The beakéd lightnings stoop :  
The sky falls down : the clouds  
Are wrung to the last drop.

Another day is born now.  
Woman, your work is done.  
This is the end of labour.  
Come out into the sun !

CECIL DAY LEWIS

## REST FROM LOVING

Rest from loving and be living,  
 Fallen is fallen past retrieving  
 The unique flyer dawn's dove  
 Arrowing down feathered with fire.

Cease denying, begin knowing.  
 Comes peace this way here comes renewing  
 With dower of bird and bud knocks  
 Loud on winter wall on death's door.

Here's no meaning but of morning.  
 Naught soon of night but stars remaining,  
 Sink lower, fade, as dark womb  
 Recedes creation will step clear.

CECIL DAY LEWIS

## LAY YOUR SLEEPING HEAD

Lay your sleeping head, my love,  
 Human on my faithless arm ;  
 Time and fevers burn away  
 Individual beauty from  
 Thoughtful children, and the grave  
 Proves the child ephemeral :  
 But in my arms till break of day  
 Let the living creature lie,  
 Mortal, guilty, but to me  
 The entirely beautiful.

Soul and body have no bounds :  
 To lovers as they lie upon  
 Her tolerant enchanted slope  
 In their ordinary swoon,  
 Grave the vision Venus sends  
 Of supernatural sympathy,  
 Universal love and hope ;  
 While an abstract insight wakes  
 Among the glaciers and the rocks  
 The hermit's sensual ecstasy.

Certainty, fidelity  
 On the stroke of midnight pass  
 Like vibrations of a bell,  
 And fashionable madmen raise  
 Their pedantic boring cry ;  
 Every farthing of the cost,  
 All the dreaded cards foretell  
 Shall be paid, but from this night  
 Not a whisper, not a thought,  
 Not a kiss nor look be lost.

Beauty, midnight, vision dies :  
 Let the winds of dawn that blow  
 Softly round your dreaming head  
 Such a day of sweetness show  
 Eye and knocking heart may bless,  
 Find the mortal world enough ;  
 Noons of dryness see you fed  
 By the involuntary powers,  
 Nights of insult let you pass  
 Watched by every human love.

W. H. AUDEN

## LEAVING BARRA

The dazzle on the sea, my darling,  
 Leads from the western channel  
 A carpet of brilliance taking  
 My leave for ever of the island.

I never shall visit that island  
 Again with its easy tempo—  
 The seal sunbathing, the circuit  
 Of gulls on the wing for garbage.

I go to a different garbage  
 And scuffle for scraps of notice,  
 Pretend to ignore the stigma  
 That stains my life and my leisure.  
 For fretful even in leisure  
 I fidget for different values,  
 Restless as a gull and haunted  
 By a hankering after Atlantis.

I do not know that Atlantis  
 Unseen and uncomprehended,  
 Dimly divined but keenly  
 Felt with a phantom hunger.

If only I could crush the hunger,  
 If only I could lay the phantom,  
 Then I should no doubt be happy  
 Like a fool or a dog or a buddha.

O the self-abnegation of Buddha,  
 The belief that is disbelieving,  
 The denial of chiaroscuro  
 Not giving a damn for existence !

But I would cherish existence,  
 Loving the beast and the bubble,  
 Loving the rain and the rainbow,  
 Considering philosophy alien.

For all the religions are alien  
 That allege that life is a fiction,  
 And when we agree in denial  
 The cock crows in the morning.

If only I could wake in the morning  
 And find I had learned the solution,  
 Wake with the knack of knowledge  
 Who as yet have only an inkling.

Though some facts foster the inkling—  
 The beauty of the moon and music,  
 The routine courage of the worker,  
 The gay endurance of women,

And you who to me among women  
 Stand for so much that I wish for,  
 I thank you, my dear, for the example  
 Of living like a fugue and moving.

For few are able to keep moving,  
 They drag and flag in the traffic ;  
 While you are alive beyond question,  
 Like the dazzle on the sea, my darling.

## THE PHOENIX ANSWERED

Sitting in this garden you cannot escape symbols,  
 Take them how you will.  
 Here on the lawn like an island where the wind is still,  
 Circled by tides in the field and swirling trees,  
 It is of love I muse,  
 Who designs the coloured fronds and heavy umbels,  
 Second-hand marriage, not for passion but business,  
 Brought on by the obliging bees.

This hedge is a cool perch for the brown turtle-dove,  
 His phoenix unseen :  
 Such was their love that perhaps they grew to be one.  
 At first the mystical making one in marriage  
 Had all my heart and my homage :  
 A fire and a fusion were what I wanted of love.  
 But bodies are separate, and her fanatic bliss  
 Left the phoenix bodiless.

Frosty burning cloud, delectable gate  
 Of heaven hopelessly far,  
 Though tilting almost to touch, whose holy fire  
 Has no corrosive property unless  
 Despair of it destroys us ;  
 When we love, toward you our faces are set.  
 Once I would win by the pains of passion alone,  
 Aim at you still, that method outgrown.

If daily love now takes from these earlier ones  
 The sweetness without the pain,  
 The burning nights, the breathless fears gone,  
 Peace in their place I never hoped to be given  
 Unless if ever in heaven—  
 This is your own success, who have at once  
 The unscathing fire and the ease of peace,  
 All that I praise and bless.

ANNE RIDLER

## MEETING POINT

Time was away and somewhere else,  
 There were two glasses and two chairs  
 And two people with the one pulse  
 (Somebody stopped the moving stairs) :  
 Time was away and somewhere else.

And they were neither up nor down,  
 The stream's music did not stop  
 Flowing through heather, limpid brown,  
 Although they sat in a coffee shop  
 And they were neither up nor down.

The bell was silent in the air  
 Holding its inverted poise—  
 Between the clang and clang a flower,  
 A brazen calyx of no noise :  
 The bell was silent in the air.

The camels crossed the miles of sand  
 That stretched around the cups and plates ;  
 The desert was their own, they planned  
 To portion out the stars and dates :  
 The camels crossed the miles of sand.

Time was away and somewhere else.  
 The waiter did not come, the clock  
 Forgot them and the radio waltz  
 Came out like water from a rock :  
 Time was away and somewhere else.

Her fingers flicked away the ash  
 That bloomed again in tropic trees :  
 Not caring if the markets crash  
 When they had forests such as these,  
 Her fingers flicked away the ash.

God or whatever means the Good  
Be praised that time can stop like this,  
That what the heart has understood  
Can verify in the body's peace  
God or whatever means the Good.

Time was away and she was here  
And life no longer what it was,  
The bell was silent in the air  
And all the room a glow because  
Time was away and she was here.

LOUIS MACNEICE

## POLITICS

*'In our time the destiny of man presents its meaning in political terms.'*—THOMAS MANN.

How can I, that girl standing there,  
My attention fix  
On Roman or on Russian  
Or on Spanish politics ?  
Yet here's a travelled man that knows  
What he talks about,  
And there's a politician  
That has read and thought,  
And maybe what they say is true  
Of war and war's alarms,  
But O that I were young again  
And held her in my arms !

W. B. YEATS

## NOW YOU ARE IN YOUR COUNTRY

Now you are in your country,  
And I, locked fast in mine,  
Walk the white road in silence,  
And see my sun decline.

I see the whole west breaking  
In flame again, to-night ;  
And earth to peace receding  
Through valleys of delight.

Sleep, in your pleasant country,  
Lie down at last, content,  
The hills of constant heaven  
Your dream's bright battlement ;

Know that the stars you talk with  
Have eyes on fields at home,  
Or buds on banks you dream of  
Now break in scented foam ;

For death has hung no silence  
Nor spring withheld one sign,  
Since you turned to your country  
And left me locked in mine.

FRANK KENDON

## DAYBREAK

At dawn she lay with her profile at that angle  
Which, sleeping, seems the stone face of an angel ;  
Her hair a harp the hand of a breeze follows  
To play, against the white cloud of the pillows.  
Then in a flush of rose she woke, and her eyes were open,  
Swimming with blue through the rose flesh of dawn.  
From her dew of lips, the drop of one word  
Fell, from a dawn of fountains, when she murmured  
' Darling,'—upon my heart the song of the first bird.  
' My dream glides in my dream,' she said, ' come true.  
I waken from you to my dream of you.'  
O, then my waking dream dared to assume  
The audacity of her sleep. Our dreams  
Flowed into each other's arms, like streams.

STEPHEN SPENDER

## THE VASE OF TEARS

Tears pouring from this face of stone,  
Angels from the heart, unhappiness  
From some dream to yourself unknown—  
Let me dry your eyes with these kisses.  
I pour what comfort of ordinariness  
I can ; faint light upon your night alone.  
And then we smother with caresses  
Both our starved needs to atone.

Stone face creased with human tears : yet  
Something in me gentle and delicate  
Sees through those eyes an ocean of green water  
And one by one the bitter drops collects  
Into my heart, a glass vase which reflects  
The world's grief weeping in its daughter.

STEPHEN SPENDER

## CURTAIN

Goodbye.

Incredulously the laced fingers loosen,  
Slowly, sensation by sensation, from their warm interchange,  
And stiffen like frosted flowers in the November garden.  
Already division piles emphasis like bullets ;  
Already the one dark air is separate and strange.

Goodbye.

There is no touch now. The wave has broken  
That for a moment charged the desolate sea.  
There is a word, or two, left to be spoken  
—Yet who would hear it ? When so swiftly distance  
Outmeasures time, engulfs identity ?

Already like the dreamer startled from sleep  
And the vivid image lost even in wakening,  
There is no taste now for the shrunken sense to keep,  
And these, the dreamer's eyes, are not alive to weep,  
And this, the clinic heart, the dreamer's, is not breaking.

Is it so easy, then ? Goodbye no more than this  
Quiet disaster ? And is there cause for sorrow  
That in the small white murder of one kiss  
Are born two ghosts, two Hamlets, two soliloquies,  
Two worlds apart, tomorrow ?

HELEN SPALDING

## THE CONFIRMATION

Yes, yours, my love, is the right human face.  
 I in my mind had waited for this long,  
 Seeing the false and searching for the true,  
 Then found you as a traveller finds a place  
 Of welcome suddenly amid the wrong  
 Valleys and rocks and twisting roads. But you,  
 What shall I call you? A fountain in a waste,  
 A well of water in a country dry,  
 Or anything that's honest and good, an eye  
 That makes the whole world bright. Your open heart,  
 Simple with giving, gives the primal deed,  
 The first good world, the blossom, the blowing seed,  
 The hearth, the steadfast land, the wandering sea,  
 Not beautiful or rare in every part,  
 But like yourself, as they were meant to be.

EDWIN MUIR

## SONG

Warm are the still and lucky miles,  
 White shores of longing stretch away,  
 The light of recognition fills  
 The whole great day, and bright  
 The tiny world of lovers' arms.

Silence invades the breathing wood  
 Where drowsy limbs a treasure keep,  
 Now greenly falls the learnèd shade  
 Across the sleeping brows  
 And stirs their secret to a smile.

Restored! Returned! The lost are born  
 On seas of shipwreck home at last:  
 See! In the fire of praising burns  
 The dry dumb past, and we  
 The life-day long shall part no more.

W. H. AUDEN

## COWPER AT OLNEY

In this green valley where the Ouse  
 Is looped in many a silver pool,  
 Seeking God's mercy and his muse  
 Went Cowper sorrowful.

Like the pale gleam of wintry sun  
 His genius lit the obscure place,  
 Where, battling with despair, lived one  
 Of melancholy's race.

By quiet waters, by green fields  
 In winter sweet as summer hay,  
 By hedgerows where the chaffinch builds  
 He went his brooding way.

And not a berry or a leaf,  
 Or stirring bough or fragrant wind,  
 But, in its moment, soothed the grief  
 Of his tormented mind.

And since, like the belovèd sheep  
 Of David's shepherd, he was led  
 By streams and pastures quiet as sleep—  
 Was he not comforted ?

SYLVIA LYND

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

No room for mourning : he's gone out  
 Into the noisy glen, or stands between the stones  
 Of the gaunt ridge, or you'll hear his shout  
 Rolling among the scree, he being a boy again.  
 He'll never fail nor die,  
 And if they laid his bones  
 In the wet vaults or iron sarcophagi  
 Of fame, he'd rise at the first summer rain  
 And stride across the hills to seek  
 His rest among the broken lands and clouds.  
 He was a stormy day, a granite peak  
 Spearing the sky ; and look, about its base  
 Words flower like crocuses in the hanging woods,  
 Blank though the dalehead and the bony face.

SIDNEY KEYES

## I TAKE THEE, LIFE

I take thee, Life,  
Because I need,  
A wanton love  
My flesh to feed.

But still my soul  
Insatiate  
Cries out, cries out  
For its true mate.

MARGOT RUDDOCK

## IN THE STRANGE ISLE

In the strange isle,  
In the green freckled wood and grassy glade,  
Strangely the man, the panther and the shadow  
Move by the well and the white stones.

Voices cry out in trees, and fingers beckon,  
The wings of a million butterflies are sunlight eyes,  
There is no sword  
In the enchanted wood.

Branches bend over like a terror,  
The sun is darkened,  
The white wind and the sun and the curling wave  
Cradle the coral shore and the tall forest.

Ceaseless the struggle in the twining circles,  
The gulls, the doves, and the dark crows ;  
The fangs of the lily bleed, and the lips  
Of the rose are torn.

Trees crash at midnight unpredicted,  
Voices cry out,  
Naked he walks, and with no fear,  
In the strange isle, the wise and gentle.

MICHAEL ROBERTS

## THE END OF FEAR

When a man has cast out fear  
All is indifferent, and dear.

When desire has fled away  
Then the little mice can play.

Leaning against the cedar's bark,  
Or on a bear's neck in the dark,

Or lying in the mighty grass,  
He is saved from what he was.

He can lay his head upon  
Another's bosom, or a stone,

And the stone is well beloved,  
And the breast by love unmoved :

The flesh uncursed and the stone blest,  
The breast a stone, the stone a breast.

RUTH PITTER

## WEEPING WATER

Weeping water, leaping fire,  
God and my grave are my desire.  
With swarming strife and scanty joy,  
Little ease and long annoy,  
I am damned and drowned in rue—  
With love then what have I to do ?

With chaste stillness, blessed peace,  
No annoy and utter ease,  
Lulled in morning's lap I lie  
And mend my sorrows in the sky.  
I am redeemed and flown above—  
Then what have I to do with love ?

Heaven is stillness, motion hell,  
When I stir not I am well.  
Wake me not, for I would be  
Laid where quiet waits on me.  
Lovely boy, I know you lie :  
Frown as you will, but pass me by.

RUTH PITTER

## IDLENESS

God, you've so much to do,  
To think of, watch and listen to,  
That I will let all else go by  
And lending ear and eye  
Help you to watch how in the combe  
Winds sweep dead leaves without a broom ;  
And rooks in the spring-reddened trees  
Restore their villages,  
Nest by dark nest  
Swaying at rest on trees' frail unrest ;  
Or on this limestone wall,  
Listening at ease, with you recall  
How once these heavy stones  
Swam in the seas as shells and bones ;  
And hear that owl snore in a tree  
Till it grows dark enough for him to see ;  
In fact, will learn to shirk  
No idleness that I may share your work.

ANDREW YOUNG

## THE MOURNER

When all your bitter grief is gone,  
 With anger and rebellion done,  
 Think then, with your more even breath—  
 How lovely was the face of Death !  
 Say you remember her sweet face,  
     The light the loveliness ;  
 The smile that passed beyond this world,  
     To rest no more on us :  
 That, knowing now how Death is loved—  
 You follow her, and stand reproved.

W. H. DAVIES

## THE HEDGE-ROW STORY

When fields here lose their colour, when the wood  
 trailing a hoary wing turns home  
 to raven night, I reckon up the sum  
 of rustic evil and clay-spattered good.

I think of the innumerable slow lives whose history  
 differs a hair's breadth from the hedge-row story :  
 thorns in black competition, the roped glory  
 of gossamer, soon gone,  
 with berries dipped in blood.

When fields here lose the light, I fear the mystery  
 of men like trees, that tower but touch the sky  
 they cannot and are felled one by one,  
 I think of saint and scarecrow schooled to die ;  
 their leafless victory stands, where nothing stood.

LILIAN BOWES-LYON

## A TIME TO DANCE

For those who had the power  
    of the forest fires that burn  
Leaving their source in ashes  
    to flush the sky with fire :  
Those whom a famous urn  
    could not contain, whose passion  
Brimmed over the deep grave  
    and dazzled epitaphs :  
For all that have won us wings  
    to clear the tops of grief,  
My friend who within me laughs  
    bids you dance and sing.

Some set out to explore  
    earth's limit, and little recked if  
Never their feet came near it  
    outgrowing the need for glory :  
Some aimed at a small objective  
    but the fierce updraught of their spirit  
Forced them to the stars.

Are honoured in public who built  
The dam that tamed a river ;  
    or holding the salient for hours  
Against odds, cut off and killed,  
    are remembered by one survivor.

All these. But most for those  
    whom accident made great,  
As a radiant chance encounter  
    of cloud and sunlight grows  
Immortal on the heart :  
    whose gift was the sudden beauty  
Of a passing moment, enriches  
    the fulfilled eye for ever.  
Their spirits float serene  
    above time's roughest reaches,  
But their seed is in us and over  
    our lives they are evergreen.

## THE OLD GODS

Old gods and goddesses who have lived so long  
 Through time and never found eternity,  
 Fettered by wasting wood and hollowing hill,

You should have fled our ever-dying song,  
 The mound, the well, and the green trysting tree  
 They are forgotten, yet you linger still.

Goddess of caverned breast and channelled brow  
 And cheeks slow hollowed by millennial tears,  
 Forests of autumn fading in your eyes,

Eternity marvels at your counted years  
 And kingdoms lost in time, and wonders how  
 There could be thoughts so bountiful and wise

As yours beneath the ever-breaking bough,  
 And vast compassion curving like the skies.

EDWIN MUIR

## THE MAN WITHOUT FAITH

A man without faith  
 Grows old before his years,  
 His world a wraith,  
 For whom the end nears  
 Like a winter mist  
 When the sun is cold  
 In the cold west.

His children about him  
 Are strangers, unknown ;  
 The love that begot them  
 Cooled and gone.

If he get riches  
They turn to rust,  
And he can do nothing  
With a handful of dust.  
Life's miracle fails him,  
Life's rapture, life's breath;  
He has done with living,  
He has forestalled death.

RICHARD CHURCH

## THE STATIONARY JOURNEY

Here at my earthly station set,  
The revolutions of the year  
Beat me bound and only let  
This astronomic world appear.

Yet if I could reverse my course  
Through ever-deepening yesterday,  
Retrace the path that led me here,  
Could I find a different way ?

I would see eld's frosted hair  
Burn black again and passion rage  
On to its source and die away  
At last in childhood's tranquil age.

Charlemagne's death-palsied hand  
Would move once more and never rest  
Until by deadlier weakness bound  
It lay against his mother's breast.

Saint Augustine gives back his soul  
To stumble in the endless maze,  
After Jesus Venus stands  
In the full centre of his gaze,

While still from death to life to naught  
 Gods, dynasties, and nations flit ;  
 Though for a while among the sand  
 Unchanged the changing Pharaohs sit.

Fast the horizons empty. Now  
 Nothing's to see but wastes and rocks,  
 And on the thinning Asian plains  
 A few wild shepherds with their flocks. . . .

So, back or forward, still we strike  
 Through Time and touch its dreaded goal.  
 Eternity's the fatal flaw  
 Through which run out world, life and soul.

And there in transmutation's blank  
 No mortal mind has ever read,  
 Or told what soul and shape are, there,  
 Blue wave, red rose, and Cæsar's head.

For there Immortal Being in  
 Solidity more pure than stone  
 Sleeps through the circle, pillar, arch,  
 Spiral, cone, and pentagon.

To the mind's eternity I turn,  
 With leaf, fruit, blossom on the spray,  
 See the dead world grow green within  
 Imagination's one long day.

There while outstretched upon the Tree  
 Christ looks across Jerusalem's towers,  
 Adam and Eve unfallen yet  
 Sleep side by side within their bowers..

There while fast in the Roman snare  
 The Carthaginian thinks of home,  
 A boy carefree in Carthage streets,  
 Hannibal fights a little Rome,

David and Homer tune their harps,  
Gaza is up, sprung from its wreck,  
Samson goes free, Delilah's shears  
Join his strong ringlets to his neck.

A dream ! the astronomic years  
Patrolled by stars and planets bring  
Time led in chains from post to post  
Of the all-conquering Zodiac ring.

EDWIN MUIR

## THE WALKING WOMAN

There's a hard wind yet and a sad road  
Between the walking woman  
And her deadly spouse, the iron lover.  
O my hair has fallen and my man  
Has fallen and my fruitful time is over :  
There is a hard wind and a sad road.

There's a jangled verse, a cry  
Beating behind that woman's face.  
O my eyes are drowned and my man  
Is drowned. Who loves a dead man's grace,  
A drowned man's kisses or a blind man's eye ?  
Cries the unsatisfied, the walking woman.

There's all the angry air, the sea,  
Between that woman and her hope :  
O once I had a house, a fire  
Until my man's proud faring broke  
My house and heart. So I'll desire  
Lovers of iron or dead men's constancy,  
Cries the still passionate, the walking woman.

SIDNEY KEYES

## WHAT THEN ?

His chosen comrades thought at school  
 He must grow a famous man ;  
 He thought the same and lived by rule,  
 All his twenties crammed with toil ;  
 ‘ *What then ?* ’ sang *Plato’s ghost*. ‘ *What then ?* ’

Everything he wrote was read,  
 After certain years he won  
 Sufficient money for his need,  
 Friends that have been friends indeed ;  
 ‘ *What then ?* ’ sang *Plato’s ghost*. ‘ *What then ?* ’

All his happier dreams came true—  
 A small old house, wife, daughter, son,  
 Grounds where plum and cabbage grew,  
 Poets and Wits about him drew ;  
 ‘ *What then ?* ’ sang *Plato’s ghost*. ‘ *What then ?* ’

‘ The work is done,’ grown old he thought,  
 ‘ According to my boyish plan ;  
 Let the fools rage, I swerved in naught,  
 Something to perfection brought ; ’  
 But louder sang that ghost, ‘ *What then ?* ’

W. B. YEATS

## HOSPITAL WARD (OF THIS GENERATION)

The world is sick, and we sick men  
Listen for feet upon the stair :  
And far off when we hear them, when,  
Nigh to despair,  
We think we hear them, we cry out  
With hope and mockery and doubt  
And blasphemy and prayer.

How beautiful the feet of them,  
Thy messengers of peace !  
But are they Thine ? Shall they condemn,  
Or bring release ?  
When all the thousand steps are climbed  
At last, shall they appear  
Haloed with life, or death-begrimed,  
Hooded with fear ?  
In what strange guise to sick men's eyes  
Shall they appear ?

Far off the feet : along the ward  
The sound-refusing doors are shut.  
But through each window like a sword  
The streams of sunshine cut ;  
And through each window, like a knife,  
The blackbird's song,  
The springtime of another life,  
Does to the sick man wrong.  
O light, to alien eyes unkind,  
O light, to make the sick man blind,  
O alien song, O song-bird's note  
That clutches at the sick man's throat,  
From company with you the years  
Divide us, and our bitter tears.

The world is sick. Let not those feet  
Delay upon the stairs :  
For silence stabs, when their soft beat  
Falls soundless on the air.

Have mercy on us sick, O Lord,  
 Who restless lie abed,  
 Praying and cursing in our ward,  
 And listening for their tread.

GEORGE ROSTREVOR HAMILTON

FÊTE CHAMPÊTRE

On the pavements the sexless toys run down.  
 Men and women go home to a sleep of stone.  
 The clock shows midnight only to the moon.

No dogs are barking, and no trains disturb  
 The dormitories of the new suburb.  
 The cat moves like a snowflake to the kerb.

The longest nightlight has long since burnt out  
 And somewhere else an unlatched garden gate  
 Strikes on the darkness of the dull and great.

The night is level on the hundred churches.  
 The human cry of the wind in the railway arches  
 Is conscience with his scolding images.

‘The stallion is nameless, yet transmits his strength.  
 The childless hero dies in a bed at length.  
 Can you hold out till daylight in the glens ?

‘The ineffable has found its word again,  
 But not a bird cries, not a fabulous one,  
 But leaves you in the evenings more alone.

‘There is not time for grief and less for love.  
 Loving is merely how the moments rave  
 Like the illusory movement of a wave.’

Though we are not as simple as we seem,  
 All men are simple in the act of dream ;  
 To shudder and revoke the waking claim.

KENNETH ALLOTT

## THE COCKY WALKERS

Grouped nightly at the cold, accepted wall,  
Carved with a gaslight chisel the lean heads  
Cry out unwittingly for Rembrandt's needle.  
These are the flashy saplings whose domain  
I cannot enter.  
They burn at lip and fingertips the stuffed paper ;  
The trouser-pocket boys, the cocky walkers,  
Sons of old mothers, with their hats askew  
Hummock the shoulder to the little flower  
That lights the palm into a nightmare land,  
A bloody basin of the sterile moon  
That lights the face that sprouts the cigarette  
Into a sudden passion of fierce colour.  
Down the cold corridor of winter nights  
I see a thousand groups that keep  
The fag alight, at walls, and in the sharp  
Stern corners of the street :  
These are the sprigs ; flash boys, uncaught,  
Treading the reedy springboard of green days.  
Theirs is a headiness, for they  
Have burned their lives up to the quarter-mark.  
The days move by them and the chill nights hold them  
In an old, unthought conspiracy, for they  
Tinkle upon tin feet that send no root.  
I see them at the cold, accepted wall,  
The trouser-pocket boys, the cocky walkers.

MERVYN PEAKE

## THIEF

To the galleys, thief, and sweat your soul out  
 With strong tugging under the curled whips,  
 That there your thievishness may find full play.  
 Whereas, before, you stole rings, flowers and watches,  
 Oaths, jests and proverbs,  
 Yet paid for bed and board like an honest man,  
 This shall be entire thief-dom : you shall steal  
 Sleep from chain-galling, diet from sour crusts,  
 Comradeship from the damned, the ten-year-chained—  
 And, more than this, the excuse for life itself  
 From a boat steered toward battles not your own.

ROBERT GRAVES

## HATE

I hated a fellow-man long ago,  
 For he compassed my spirit's overthrow,  
 And the years that followed were bitter with woe.

And if someone had sent that man to his rest  
 I think that my heart would have danced in my breast,  
 And I dreamed that I sought him, and slew him with zest.

But a week gone by the word went round  
 That my enemy's body was under the ground ;  
 And my heart was heavy, and gave no sound.

Only the wind and the skies made call,  
 ' God have pity upon you all.'

HERBERT PALMER

## IN REGENT'S PARK

These Sunday mornings Londoners delight—  
with or without the trotting child—  
their workday eyes grown mild  
but with their panoply precise and spry,  
the handsome pleasure-ways of parks to try.

Dahlias down the banks flow crisp and bright,  
the grass is winter-short and pungent,  
dipping oars are plangent,  
and in the light mist, dripping grey like silk,  
water and trees and air seem smoothed in milk.

So that the forbidden island in the stream,  
the chimney that over Lords looms,  
and those peculiar domes,  
might be near or distant illimitable miles ;  
and as the still sky breaks into a thousand gulls,

might burst into some bright or strange kind,  
or open into a different scale.

To change in this style  
is the property, I find, of love, which brings  
a new dimension to all physical things.

For if I see my park with Vivian's eye—  
the formal eye of a painter's mind—  
it is changed as under his hand,  
and through the mists of his being are visible  
hints of glory before unimaginable.

One does not learn to look with another's eye  
for ever, but the rigid world  
moves and is unfurled.

This is the effect and virtue of passion's part,  
that trains the eye and exercises the heart.

## PRAYER FOR RAIN

O God, make it rain !  
 Loose the soft silver passion of the rain !  
 Send swiftly from above  
 This clear token of Thy love.  
 Make it rain !

Deck the bushes and the trees  
 With the tassels of the rain.  
 Make the brooks pound to the seas  
 And the earth shine young again.  
 God of passion, send the rain !

Oh, restore our ancient worth  
 With Thy rain !  
 Ease the heartache of the earth ;  
 Sap the grain.  
 Fill the valleys and the dales  
 With Thy silver slanting gales ;  
 And through England and wild Wales  
 Send the rain !

Lord, restore us to Thy will  
 With the rain !  
 Soak the valley, drench the hill,  
 Drown the stain ;  
 Smite the mountain's withered hips,  
 Wash the rouge from sunset's lips,  
 Fill the sky with singing ships.  
 Send the rain !

HERBERT PALMER

## SUMMER RAIN

Against the window pane,  
against the temple of my brain  
beat the muffled taps of rain.

Upon the scorched and mottled leaves,  
upon the blenched and pented sheaves  
the land receives

the liquid flood :  
water like a blush of blood  
returns to the parched rood.

The fox has left his fetid hovel  
to lick the drenched blades of sorrel ;  
odours rise from thyme and fennel.

The worm in his retreat deep under  
the earth's insipid crust,  
hearing a distant drumming thunder  
blindly renews his upward undulation.  
The soil respires as if in emulation  
of living things. All elements their maculation  
desire and achieve. A warm breath  
issues from the nostrils beneath  
the mask of death.

HERBERT READ

## SONG

Nothing I have is worth a tear,  
Books and papers, gauds and gear.  
Happier beetle spread on his back  
Than I boxed up with this what-d'ye-lack.  
What makes man as he stands ?  
Head, belly and hands,  
Three to serve one, and the world goes on.

Once I'd a heart, but they did not approve it,  
 Slit up my side, and let remove it,  
 Since I've been good they have given to me  
 Paper galore, and much good may it do me.

What brings man relief ?

Bread, pudding and beef.

Three kinds of food : paper's no good.

Soldiers tell me fighting's no frolic,  
 Wise men tell me love is a colic,  
 Bishops tell me learning's a lie—  
 Somebody tells me that I must die.

What shall serve man then ?

Sword, sonnet or pen ?

All things must fall ; God help us all !

E. N. DA COSTA ANDRADE

#### IN THESE OUR WINTER DAYS

In these our winter days  
 Death's iron tongue is glib  
 Numbing with fear all flesh upon  
 A fiery-hearted globe.

An age once green is buried,  
 Numbered the hours of light ;  
 Blood-red across the snow our sun  
 Still trails his faint retreat.

Spring through death's iron guard  
 Her million blades shall thrust ;  
 Love that was sleeping, not extinct,  
 Throw off the nightmare crust.

Eyes, though not ours, shall see  
 Sky-high a signal flame,  
 The sun returned to power above  
 A world, but not the same.

CECIL DAY LEWIS

## AND DEATH SHALL HAVE NO DOMINION

And death shall have no dominion.  
Dead men naked they shall be one  
With the man in the wind and the west moon ;  
When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones gone,  
They shall have stars at elbow and foot ;  
Though they go mad they shall be sane,  
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again ;  
Though lovers be lost love shall not ;  
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.  
Under the windings of the sea  
They lying long shall not die windily ;  
Twisting on racks when sinews give way,  
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break ;  
Faith in their hands shall snap in two,  
And the unicorn evils run them through ;  
Split all ends up they shan't crack ;  
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.  
No more may gulls cry at their ears  
Or waves break loud on the seashores ;  
Where blew a flower may a flower no more  
Lift its head to the blows of the rain ;  
Though they be mad and dead as nails,  
Heads of the characters hammer through daisies ;  
Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,  
And death shall have no dominion.

DYLAN THOMAS

## TEMPT ME NO MORE

Tempt me no more ; for I  
 Have known the lightning's hour,  
 The poet's inward pride,  
 The certainty of power.

Bayonets are closing round.  
 I shrink : yet I must wring  
 A living from despair  
 And out of steel a song.

Though song, though breath be short,  
 I'll share not the disgrace  
 Of those that ran away  
 Or never left the base.

Comrades, my tongue can speak  
 No comfortable words,  
 Calls to a forlorn hope,  
 Gives work and not rewards.

Oh, keep the sickle sharp  
 And follow still the plough :  
 Others may reap, though some  
 See not the winter through.

Father, who endest all,  
 Pity our broken sleep ;  
 For we lie down with tears  
 And waken but to weep.

And if our blood alone  
 Will melt this iron earth,  
 Take it. It is well spent  
 Easing a saviour's birth.

' NATION SHALL SPEAK PEACE . . . '

There are no frontiers in the air ;  
 Alien music, alien song,  
 Alien words are everywhere  
 On the silence borne along.

By the lifting of a hand  
 Voices from the sky come down ;  
 Songs we cannot understand  
 Yet would cherish as our own.

And these unknown hands which play ;  
 Unknown voices which can bless ;  
 Shall we at some blind hour slay  
 And forget their loveliness ?

Overhead an iron bird  
 Churns the air with channelling noise ;  
 But the music is unstirred  
 And unstirred the singing voice.

WILLIAM SOUTAR

THE HAND THAT SIGNED THE PAPER FELLED A CITY

The hand that signed the paper felled a city ;  
 Five sovereign fingers taxed the breath,  
 Doubled the globe of dead and halved a country ;  
 These five kings did a king to death.

The mighty hand leads to a sloping shoulder,  
 The finger joints are cramped with chalk ;  
 A goose's quill has put an end to murder  
 That put an end to talk.

The hand that signed the treaty bred a fever,  
 And famine grew, and locusts came ;  
 Great is the hand that holds dominion over  
 Man by a scribbled name.

The five kings count the dead but do not soften  
 The crusted wound nor pat the brow ;  
 A hand rules pity as a hand rules heaven ;  
 Hands have no tears to flow.

DYLAN THOMAS

## AS I WALKED OUT ONE EVENING

As I walked out one evening,  
 Walking down Bristol Street,  
 The crowds upon the pavement  
 Were fields of harvest wheat.

And down by the brimming river  
 I heard a lover sing  
 Under an arch of the railway  
 ‘Love has no ending.

‘I’ll love you, dear, I’ll love you  
 Till China and Africa meet  
 And the river jumps over the mountain  
 And the salmon sing in the street.

‘I’ll love you till the ocean  
 Is folded and hung up to dry  
 And the seven stars go squawking  
 Like geese about the sky.

‘The years shall run like rabbits,  
 For in my arms I hold  
 The Flower of the Ages  
 And the first love of the world.’

But all the clocks in the city  
 Began to whirr and chime :  
 ‘O let not Time deceive you,  
 You cannot conquer Time.

‘In the burrows of the nightmare  
 Where Justice naked is,  
 Time watches from the shadow  
 And coughs when you would kiss.

‘ In headaches and in worry  
     Vaguely life leaks away,  
 And Time will have his fancy  
     To-morrow or to-day.

‘ Into many a green valley  
     Drifts the appalling snow ;  
 Time breaks the threaded dances  
     And the diver’s brilliant bow.

‘ O plunge your hands in water,  
     Plunge them in up to the wrist ;  
 Stare, stare in the basin  
     And wonder what you’ve missed.

‘ The glacier knocks in the cupboard,  
     The desert sighs in the bed,  
 And the crack in the tea-cup opens  
     A lane to the land of the dead.

‘ Where the beggars raffle the banknotes  
     And the Giant is enchanting to Jack,  
 And the Lily-white Boy is a Roarer  
     And Jill goes down on her back.

‘ O look, look in the mirror,  
     O look in your distress ;  
 Life remains a blessing  
     Although you cannot bless.

‘ O stand, stand at the window  
     As the tears scald and start ;  
 You shall love your crooked neighbour  
     With your crooked heart.’

It was late, late in the evening,  
     The lovers they were gone ;  
 The clocks had ceased their chiming  
     And the deep river ran on.

## THE SNOW

In no way that I chose to go  
 Could I escape the falling snow.

I shut my eyes, wet with my fears ;  
 The snow still whispered in my ears.

I stopped my ears in deaf disguise :  
 The snow still fell before my eyes.

Snow was my comrade, snow my fate,  
 In a country huge and desolate.

My footsteps made a shallow space,  
 And then the snow filled up the place,

And all the walking I had done  
 Was on a journey not begun.

I did not know the distance gone,  
 But resolutely travelled on,

While silently on every hand  
 Fell the sorrow of the land,

And no way that I chose to go  
 Could lead me from the grief of snow.

CLIFFORD DYMENT

## THE AXE IN THE WOOD

I stopped to watch a man strike at the trunk  
 Of a tree grown strong through many centuries.  
 His quick axe, sharp and glittering, struck deep,  
 And yellow chips went spinning in the air—

And I remember how I liked the sight  
 Of poise and rhythm as the bright axe swung.  
 A man who fells a tree makes people watch,  
 For glory seems to crowd upon the axe.

I know the answers to the chance reproach :  
 How old the tree was, and how dangerous,  
 How it might fall, how timber in a stack  
 Had more good in it than a growing tree—  
 But I saw death cut down a thousand men  
 In that tall lovely legacy of wood.

CLIFFORD DYMENT

## STRANGERS

The sad bells sound ;  
 Night hastens on apace ;  
 Oh, leave me not to languish  
 In this place !

I stand—I know—  
 Beside you, weeping not,  
 Pressing my childish Why ?  
 My stubborn What ?

I would forgive  
 If only a dream you are,  
 If only a little I'm to stay,  
 And wake afar.

Cold is this church,  
 Cold the high arches, cold,  
 With dazzling light, and Oh,  
 How old ! how old !

Under the hollow roof  
 The strangers' voices come—  
 'The night is dark, and I  
 Am far from home.'

WALTER DE LA MARE

## WHAT WAS LOST

I sing what was lost and dread what was won,  
 I walk in a battle fought over again,  
 My king a lost king, and lost soldiers my men ;  
 Feet to the Rising and Setting may run,  
 They always beat on the same small stone.

W. B. YEATS

## THE WRONG ROAD

Say this when you return,  
 'I came by the wrong road,  
 And saw the starved woods burn.  
 I stopped, bewildered, lost,  
 And of a sudden, heard  
 The red-throated bird,  
 The holy bird, the ghost.  
 I felt the shivering reed  
 Fevered with frost.  
 I watched the Crucified  
 Writhing upon the Cross  
 With the spear in His side,  
 And beneath Him the moss  
 With the crimson buds  
 Tortured, multiplied  
 Under the dripping goad,  
 Close by the road,  
 The wrong road.'

RICHARD CHURCH

## POEM

Heart of the heartless world,  
Dear heart, the thought of you  
Is the pain at my side,  
The shadow that chills my view.

The wind rises in the evening  
Reminds that autumn is near.  
I am afraid to lose you,  
I am afraid of my fear.

On the last mile to Huesca,  
The last fence for our pride,  
Think so kindly, dear, that I  
Sense you at my side.

And if bad luck should lay my stren  
Into the shallow grave,  
Remember all the good you can ;  
Don't forget my love.

JOHN CURNFORD

## ONE NIGHT

One night he lay on my breast,  
One rapt swift-fleeting night ;  
Then marched away with the rest  
In the morning light :  
For I was only a woman, and so  
I had to let him go.

And now another's breast  
Holds him through endless night ;  
And he marches no more with the rest  
In the morning light :  
For she is his mother, the earth, and so  
Need never let him go.

WILFRID GIBSON

## THREE CITIES

Crossing the border, the first city I came to  
Was white with death.

No orders harsh, no living voices rude,  
Jarred the equality and quietude  
Of citizens with feet to the sunset lying.

Crossing the border, the next city I came to  
Was grey with sleep.

I heard men breathe, I heard a watchman shout,  
I heard a soul in frenzy of dream cry out,  
And citizens in rooms unquiet stirring.

Crossing the border, the third city I came to  
Was red with life.

They worked, they fed, they lived, in equal shares,  
They marched in line, they wheeled, they formed in squares,  
The citizens for war to the death preparing.

GEORGE ROSTREVOR HAMILTON

## ULLABY

Though the world has slipped and gone,  
Sounds my loud discordant cry  
Like the steel bird's song on high :  
' Still one thing is left—the Bone ! '  
Then outdanced the Babioun.

She sat in the hollow of the sea—  
A socket whence the eye's put out—  
She sang to the child a lullaby  
(The steel birds' nest was thereabout).

' Do, do, do, do—  
Thy mother's hied to the vaster race :  
The Pterodactyl made its nest  
And laid a steel egg in her breast—  
She'll work no more, nor dance, nor moan,  
And I am come to take her place,  
Do, do.

‘There’s nothing left but earth’s low bed—  
(The Pterodactyl fouls its nest) :  
But steel wings fan thee to thy rest,  
And wingless truth and larvae lie  
And eyeless hope and handless fear—  
All these for thee as toys are spread,  
Do—do—

‘Red is the bed of Poland, Spain,  
And thy mother’s breast, who has grown wise  
In that fouled nest. If she could rise,  
Give birth again,

‘In wolfish pelt she’d hide thy bones  
To shield thee from the world’s long cold,  
And down on all fours shouldst thou crawl,  
For thus from no height canst thou fall—  
Do, do.

‘She’d give no hands : there’s naught to hold  
And naught to make : there’s dust to sift,  
But no food for the hands to lift.  
Do, do.

‘Heed my ragged lullaby,  
Fear not living, fear not chance ;  
All is equal—blindness, sight,  
There is no depth, there is no height :  
Do, do.

‘The Judas-coloured sun is gone,  
And with the Ape thou art alone—  
Do,  
Do.’

EDITH SITWELL

## CLASSIC ENCOUNTER

Arrived upon the downs of asphodel  
 I walked towards the military quarter  
 To find the sunburnt ghosts of allied soldiers  
 Killed on the Chersonese.

I met a band of palefaced weary men  
 Got up in odd equipment. ‘Hi,’ I said,  
 ‘Are you Gallipoli?’

And one, the leader, with a voice of gold,  
 Answered: ‘No. Ours, Sir, was an older bungle.  
 We are Athenian hoplites who sat down  
 Before young Syracuse.

‘Need I recount our too-much-memoired end?  
 The hesitancy of our General Staff,  
 The battle in the Harbour, where Hope fled  
 But we could not?’

‘Not our disgrace in that,’ the leader added,  
 ‘But we are those proficient in the arts  
 Freed in return for the repeated verses  
 Of our Euripides.

‘Those honeyed words did not soothe Cerberus’  
 (The leader grinned), ‘For sulky Charon hire  
 Deficient, and by Rhadamanthos ruled  
 No mitigation.

‘And yet with men, born victims of their ears,  
 The chorus of the weeping Troades  
 Prevailed to gain the freedom of our limbs  
 And waft us back to Athens.

‘Through every corridor of this old barracks  
 We wander without friends; not fallen or  
 Survivors in a military sense:  
 Hence our disgrace.’

He turned; and as the rank mists took them in  
 They chanted of the God to Whom men pray,  
 Whether He be Compulsion, or All-Fathering,  
 Or Fate and blind.

## IN TIME OF SUSPENSE

Draw to the curtains then, and let it rain.  
We'll look no more on that disordered scene :  
Blind rage upon a blinded window-pane,  
The shivering white upon the darkening green ;  
Nor that beyond it leaping to and fro,  
Ghost in the ruined garden, or mad briar.  
Shut out confusion, draw the curtains to,  
Build the cathedrals of the fire anew.  
Close, eyes, on doubt, and open on desire.

Here, in the quiet brilliance of belief,  
We fashion life at such intensity,  
The very chairs might rustle into leaf  
And panels grope to build their primal tree.  
Now when our bodies meet like star and star,  
Now when our minds remoter commerce do,  
No wish too subtle and no world too far,  
But we, so perfectly in tune we are,  
Passionately conceive and make it true.

And so farewell to Winter ; for I hear  
The lambs rejoicing on a hill of jade,  
The blackbird in his vocal graph of fear  
Scattering darkness down the painted glade.  
It crowds the curtains, mad in bud and wing,  
That world of passion that your fancy craves,  
That England that the fancy, quickening,  
Cannot but call the very eye of Spring,  
Lashed by the curled abandon of her waves !

Folly of dreaming, when you have entwined  
Wild arms about the dreamer and the dream !  
Drawn by those gentle Avons I shall find  
A land where April does not merely seem.  
Narrow horizons ! Yet how wide to me  
For whom they compass all those island charms  
That I must die to safeguard, it may be :  
An England the aspiring candles see,  
Narrow enough to compass in my arms.

So in this room. But when I stood alone  
 One evening on a windy crown of land  
 Beneath the emblem of a youthful moon,  
 And watched oblivion like a tired hand  
 Folding the map of Spring away, I knew  
 Hill upon hill receding were no more  
 Than picture and faint effigy of you,  
 Nor shall I ever after lose that view  
 Though I descend into the night of war.

For us, no heartening slogan will assuage  
 What must be suffered in the mad descent.  
 We dreamed that war was but an awkward age  
 And country could be lost in continent.  
 The cretin world remains where it began,  
 Clings to the shambles and improvement shelves.  
 Too undeceived for patriotic man  
 Youth takes up arms to rescue what it can ;  
 For all is lost but what we have ourselves.

When war came to our cradles once, it meant  
 Only the mutter of a thunder-clap  
 Somewhere beyond the tidy hills of Kent,  
 A black line every morning on a map,  
 Germans in the allotment, trains unlit—  
 Did we not learn of war in gentle doses ?  
 We merely breathed it like a dangerous grit  
 In every breath we drew, contracted it  
 From our warm bottles, like tuberculosis.

Formed by the years of agony, wherein  
 Fear stole into the heart and set up house,  
 Formed to be nervous as a violin,  
 We find no brothers in the dead. For us  
 No voice will speak in the white cemeteries  
 Of France. We are not of that careless kind  
 To whom life seemed to offer prize on prize,  
 Who, at the terminus, with laughing eyes  
 Saw only joy in battle. Blind, stark blind.

Nor are we of the next unhappy age  
 That laughed, with laughter hollow as an urn  
 Raised to Belief, the murdered heritage.  
 Now from those ageing pantaloons we learn  
 The young are very serious. Even so.  
 As passionately serious as the Spring  
 After the sterile gaieties of snow.  
 Give us but time enough, and we will show  
 These barren valleys how to laugh and sing !

Give us but time, we say. For now, on all,  
 The radiant anguish of a dream is thrown.  
 Vivid the bird beyond the orchard wall  
 Who fills Goodnight with poignancy unknown.  
 More beautiful because it is more haunted  
 Our world revolves. Accusing as a text,  
 These walls, these shapes of love we have been granted,  
 Are critically watching though enchanted :  
 ' This Winter, yes,' they nod at us. ' But next ? '

Thus for the island genius, Liberty,  
 Much loved by Roman letters in our stone,  
 Another generation learns to die  
 Gravely, not caring if the flags are flown,  
 Believing simply it must save for Earth  
 A way of life becoming to mankind,  
 A grace of centuries, a thing of worth :  
 This we believe, who by a peaceful hearth  
 Have laughing eyes tonight, but are not blind.

Then let the violin on its own nerves  
 Be racked, if only the sweet Master seek  
 The harmony its brittle heart conserves.  
 What if, while you and I contrive to speak  
 With exiled April in a distant room,  
 The clouds should lift, and a young moon outside  
 Swim like an amulet beyond the gloom ?  
 Shall we not look upon this night to come ?  
 Blow out the candles—throw the curtains wide !

## FLIGHT

By day, the returning terror of swifts, the scream  
 Of the loop over leaf, the power-dive on to the thatch ;  
 And the robin whose vivid gift is a tongue of flame  
 To startle the stone at your foot into lyrical speech.  
 By night the approach of the bat, neurotic and odd,  
 A flicker of bony fingers here and there ;  
 And the cool owl swimming in the blinded wood,  
 A big moth saying nothing in grey air.

By day, the shuttle of colour, speed that belongs,  
 To the shadow that drops like a stone, the jewel that soars.  
 By night, the suspicion, the mere innuendo of wings,  
 The hint of a fugitive shadow across the stars.

By day, *Jubilate* of saints in the heart of the holly,  
 By night, the cry of the lost in the luminous valley.

LAWRENCE WHISTLER

## THE KESTRELS

When I would think of you, my mind holds only  
 The small defiant kestrels—how they cut  
 The raincloud with sharp wings, continually circling  
 About a storm-rocked elm, with passionate cries.  
 It was an early month. The plow cut hard.  
 The may was knobbed with chilly buds. My folly  
 Was great enough to lull away my pride.

There is no virtue now in blind reliance  
 On place or person or the forms of love.  
 The storm bears down the pivotal tree, the cloud  
 Turns to the net of an inhuman fowler  
 And drags us from the air. Our wings are clipped.  
 Yet still our love and luck lies in our parting :  
 Those cries and wings surprise our surest act.

SIDNEY KEYES

## REFLECTIONS ON THE FALL OF FRANCE, JUNE 1940

Under these brooding skies,  
Still, pewter-grey,  
Why is it, France, of you  
I've dreamed all day?  
On the dark fountain's face  
Fall the bright leaves;  
Memory's looking glass  
Where the heart grieves.

Here are tall forest trees,  
Half-dreamt, half-known,  
Brown as old tapestries,  
Their summer flown;  
Here one of Corot's ponds  
Hidden, remote,  
Where a small red-capped boy  
Tethers his goat.

Silent these autumn woods;  
Then faint, forlorn,  
From some deep castled glade  
Sounds the sad horn;  
Echoes of cavalcades  
Ridden away,  
Magic of poets' words  
Time can't betray:

Words sown so long ago  
In an old lamplit room  
Where a dear Mademoiselle  
Taught them to bloom.  
France, it's not true today,  
True that you're gone!  
You who are part of us,  
Bone of our bone!

## WAITING FOR THE WIND

The year turns. Summer blown from Europe  
fills skies with grazing islands, throws sickle beaches  
flecked with red feathers round uncharted bays

only a day ago I saw a cloud  
grey as burnt straw, shaped like an ear of wheat  
lie tall across the country, from sky to sky

preceding wind, a banner. Here in England  
how we lie silent watching the bowl of sky  
how we lie silent waiting for the wind—

millions listening for it, for the clicking of twigs  
or patter of leaves before it, say under their breath  
‘Now it is bending the spruces northward on Europe

gathering resin and thunder. Yesterday I saw  
a hairy cloud, a banner being carried  
over the roofs of London, white at mid-day

but by night a red veil on the sun.’  
Millions expecting the sudden running of news—  
‘It has crossed the coast : eastward the dunes are smoking.’

Only a day ago I saw a cloud  
feathered like pride, a banner high over Essex  
but no lathe stopped to watch it hasten

no flier under it saw the streets  
mile upon mile of rearing faces, figures  
running into the fields and staring upwards—

light and white as ash of straws, a banner  
shaped like an ear of wheat, full of small breasts  
and after it the quick invincible wind.

But still the talk runs, mouth to ear, ‘the wind  
is coming, is crossing the coast.’ In the fields no noise  
as yet, but the starlings telling of weather.

## HIGH FLIGHT

Oh ! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings ;  
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth  
Of sun-split clouds—and done a hundred things  
You have not dreamed of—wheeled and soared and swung  
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there  
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung  
My eager craft thro' footless halls of air.

Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue  
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace  
Where never lark, nor even eagle flew—  
And while with silent, lifting mind I've trod  
The high, untrespassed sanctity of space,  
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.

JOHN GILLESPIE MAGEE

## I THINK CONTINUALLY

I think continually of those who were truly great,  
Who, from the womb, remembered the soul's history  
Through corridors of light where the hours are suns  
Endless and singing. Whose lovely ambition  
Was that their lips, still touched with fire,  
Should tell of the Spirit clothed from head to foot in song.  
And who hoarded from the Spring branches  
The desires falling across their bodies like blossoms.

What is precious is never to forget  
The essential delight of the blood drawn from ageless springs  
Breaking through rocks in worlds before our earth.  
Never to deny its pleasure in the morning simple light  
Nor its grave evening demand for love.  
Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother  
With noise and fog the flowering of the spirit.

Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields  
 See how these names are fêted by the waving grass  
 And by the streamers of white cloud  
 And whispers of wind in the listening sky.  
 The names of those who in their lives fought for life,  
 Who wore at their hearts the fire's centre.  
 Born of the sun they travelled a short while towards the sun,  
 And left the vivid air signed with their honour.

STEPHEN SPENDER

STILL FALLS THE RAIN

(THE RAIDS, 1940. NIGHT AND DAWN)

Still falls the Rain—  
 Dark as the world of man, black as our loss—  
 Blind as the nineteen hundred and forty nails  
 Upon the Cross.

Still falls the Rain  
 With a sound like the pulse of the heart that is changed to the  
     hammer-beat  
 In the Potter's Field, and the sound of the impious feet

On the Tomb :

Still falls the Rain  
 In the Field of Blood where the small hopes breed and the  
     human brain  
 Nurtures its greed, that worm with the brow of Cain.

Still falls the Rain  
 At the feet of the Starved Man hung upon the Cross.  
 Christ that each day, each night, nails there, have mercy on  
     us—

On Dives and on Lazarus :  
 Under the Rain the sore and the gold are as one.

Still falls the Rain—

Still falls the Blood from the Starved Man's wounded Side :  
He bears in His Heart all wounds,—those of the light that  
died,

The last faint spark

In the self-murdered heart, the wounds of the sad uncompre-  
hending dark,

The wounds of the baited bear,—

The blind and weeping bear whom the keepers beat  
On his helpless flesh . . . the tears of the hunted hare.

Still falls the Rain—

Then—O Ile leape up to my God : who pulles me doun—

See, see where Christ's blood streames in the firmament :

It flows from the Brow we nailed upon the tree

Deep to the dying, to the thirsting heart

That holds the fires of the world,—dark-smirched with pain

As Cæsar's laurel crown.

Then sounds the voice of One who like the heart of man

Was once a child who among beasts has lain—

' Still do I love, still shed my innocent light, my Blood, for  
thee.'

EDITH SITWELL

#### LONDON

London, the ' Flower of Cities All '—

As old Dunbar once did you call—

' Rose Royal and Original ! '

You, that have seen beneath your sky  
Long lines of men go marching by  
To take the field for Liberty !

What threat of War and War's deray  
Hath shook your walls that yesterday  
Heard merry-make and pipers play ?

What sable pall is dropt by night  
 Upon the town that shone so bright,  
 Streets, shops ashine, and myriad light ?

And they, your peerless women, they  
 That are your silent soldiery—  
 What fate for them, and theirs, may be ?

And we that are your sons of grace—  
 This night we bow like one that prays,  
 For a man must love his mothering-place.

And when the war-planes hover near,  
 And the wing'd harpies swoop and lower,  
 We love you most, O fadeless flower.

ERNEST RHYS

#### THE CHILDREN

Upon the street they lie  
 Beside the broken stone :  
 The blood of children stares from the broken stone.

Death came out of the sky  
 In the bright afternoon :  
 Darkness slanted over the bright afternoon.

Again the sky is clear  
 But upon earth a stain :  
 The earth is darkened with a darkening stain :

A wound which everywhere  
 Corrupts the hearts of men :  
 The blood of children corrupts the hearts of men.

Silence is in the air :  
 The stars move to their places :  
 Silent and serene the stars move to their places :

But from the earth the children stare  
 With blind and fearful faces :  
 And our charity is in the children's faces.

WILLIAM SOUTAR

## A HOUSE IN WARTIME

Look at this ancient house ; it has survived  
Three centuries of time, and human history.  
Things have grown old in it. Grandfather clocks  
Have frayed much catgut hauling down the hours,  
Pot handles have worn smooth, and poker-knobs  
Been polished by palms long folded over breasts  
Now quiet and untroubled in the churchyard.

Search any corner here, attic or cellar,  
Odd pantry cupboard or a gunroom shelf,  
You'll find the throw-outs of ten generations,  
Household rubbish made romantic by time ;  
Print bonnets, bundles of letters, broken toys,  
Pathetic vestiges of civilized life,  
Emblems of peace and a continued growth  
In one place, in one faith, of civil man  
And all his works. Here is the centre of it,  
That long activity in hope ; the plans,  
The achievement, the discarded and replaced,  
All gathered in this house, beneath a roof  
Where the bats hang, and hermit spiders lurk.  
I should be sure enough of all I hold  
Within such walls. I should look out through windows  
Set three feet back in mellowed brick and stone,  
And stand secure amid my universe  
Now turning to its rich, late summer days,  
Life's discipline grown fruitful. I should see,  
Like some old patriarch in a lost religion,  
My wife and children round me, the fulfilment  
Of mutual love beyond the need of words.

Instead I hear the wind wail in the walls.  
By night and day I hear the fleets of death  
Pass overhead, to deal out mutilation  
On those who have no quarrel with the sky,  
But look to it as their forefathers looked,  
For rain, for sunshine, for the busy song  
Of larks in spring, and movement of the stars,  
Those symbols of a God half-understood.

The ancient house dissolves. My lifework thins  
 And a reverberation tears it down.  
 My gathered harvest is consumed in fire,  
 Thunder, and fire that flashes in their eyes,  
 My loved ones, gone down in their agony.  
 The raid is done. The sky is clear again  
 For stars by night, and singing lark by day.  
 Eternity once more puts on the mask  
 Of time, to hide its dreadful wisdom from me.

Still, after peril, stands my house foursquare,  
 Still, with the nightmare passed, I may contrive  
 To comfort those I yet may call my own.  
 The clock ticks on, the bat and spider keep  
 A sacred shadow in the roof above.  
 Laughter, love's fullest echo, fills the house.  
 Nothing has changed, except that Universe  
 I dared to raise, before I looked on fear.

RICHARD CHURCH

#### LETTER TO MY WIFE

The loud mechanical voices of the sirens  
 Lure me from sleep, and on the heath, like stars,  
 Moths fall into a mounting shaft of light.  
 Airplanes whirr over and then the night stays quiet ;  
 The moon is peeled of cloud, its gold is changed  
 On stone for silver and the cap of sky  
 Glitters like quartz, impersonal and remote.  
 This surface is the same, the clock's bland face,  
 Its smiling moustaches, hide the spring, knotted  
 Like muscles, and the crouching jungle hammer.

The same but so different with you not here.  
 This evening when I turned from the clothes you left,  
 Empty and silk, the souls of swallows flickered  
 Against the glass of our house : I felt no better  
 Along the tree-massed alleys where I saw  
 The long pale legs on benches in the dark.

It was no vague nostalgia which I breathed  
 Between the purple colloids of the air ;  
 My lust was as precise and fierce as that of  
 The wedge-headed jaguar or the travelling Flaubert.

But I only encountered the ghosts of the suburb,  
 Those ghosts you know and who are real and walk  
 And talk in the small public gardens, by the tawdry  
 Local monuments ; the Witch and Big Head  
 And the others, fleeting and familiar as  
 Our memories and ambitions, and just as dead.  
 Being alone they stopped me ; Big Head first.  
 Removing her unbelievable hat, she showed me  
 What before I had only conjectured, and she whispered :  
*O lucky you—you might have been born like this.*

I knew it was true but, hurrying on, the Witch  
 Lifted her cane and barred the way : she is  
 Lean and very dirty, but hanging round  
 That skeleton are rags of flesh still handsome.  
 Moving her lips madly and in a foreign tone she said :  
*Oh, do not hope, boy—you will come to this.*  
 I ran, being certain that she had not erred,  
 Back to our room where now the only noise  
 Is the icy modulated voice of Mozart  
 And the false clock ticking on the mantelpiece.

Now in the bubble of London whose glass will soon  
 Smeat into death, at the still calm hour of four,  
 I see the shadows of our life, the Fates  
 We narrowly missed, our possible destiny.  
 I try to say that love is more solid than  
 Our bodies, but I only want you here.  
*I know they created love and that the rest*  
*Is ghosts ; war murders love—I really say*  
 But dare I write it to you who have said it  
 Always and have no consolation from the ghosts ?

## THE CRUEL SOLSTICE

To-night the stranger city and the old  
 Moon that stands over it, proclaim  
 A cruel solstice, coming ice and cold  
 Thoughts and the darkening of the heart's flame.  
 'Stand up,' speaks soul, 'let wisdom turn the time  
 Into an image of your day's despite';  
 O clever soul, we were born separate,  
 Held only in hard glance or studied rhyme.  
 'Sleep then, tired singer, stop the mouth  
 Of the unhappy month and take your rest.'  
 O cunning voice, I have not strength enough,  
 Being no stranger here, but uncouth guest.  
 So must I walk or falter by the wall,  
 Wondering at my impotence  
 Of thought and action; at the fall  
 Of love and cities and the heart's false diligence.  
 To-night I cannot speak, remembering  
 For all my daily talk, I dare not enter  
 The empty month; can only stand and think  
 Of you, my dearest, and the approaching winter.

SIDNEY KEYES

## TO MY WIFE

Out of the wind and the wind's image  
 tall and impatient as a moving tree,  
 you run as you will run age after age  
 as bright in beauty as the mind can see:  
 moving within the wind, within the mind,  
 carried away, away with waving hair  
 wind-ruffed, waving as you leave behind  
 the mortal picture Time will seek to draw:  
 and yet that Time will never quite impair,  
 for the wind's image like a moving wand  
 will draw this single tree against your hair,  
 and its gold leaf will linger in the mind  
 when the wind drops and Time and tree are bare.

JOHN BAYLISS

## TAKE YOUR GUN

Man, take your gun : and put to shame  
earthquake and plague, the acts of God.  
You maim the crazy and the lame.

Terror is their palsy, the knees  
of men buckle for fear of man.  
You are the God whom frenzy pleases.

You are the gas-man, and the flier  
who drops his bomb ; the man in tanks.  
You wire mines and fear the fire.

And dig the hollow street with trenches  
the gas-main and the sewer cross.  
The stench of dead men makes you flinch.

But if the dying whimper, pain  
pricks you like courage, like delight.  
The vein sings to the cruel brain.

What are you, man, that gun in hand  
with savagery and pity go,  
and face to face with madness stand ;

and acid-drenched and poison-sprayed  
see flame run lovely like a wake  
from raiders ; and the burning lake  
shake overhead ? You are afraid.

The shadow flickers on the wall  
like morse, like gun-shot. Terror walks  
the tall roofs where the snipers hawk.  
He stalks you, man. And, man, you fall.

‘ NO CLOCK WITH NUMBERED EYES ’

No clock with numbered eyes or measured bell  
 Sparely across the dark to give us word  
 Of the lost sun’s huge whereabouts, no starred  
 And wheeling roof of air whose patterns tell  
 The hour—but like that medieval hell  
 Preached of in choirs where now the heron perches  
 Grey among skeleton windows, these night watches,  
 Moonless and full of poignant waiting, still  
 Proffer no light nor clue for guessing. Dusk  
 Once black, somewhere there’s morning on the march ;  
 Two years away, or three, or not so much ?  
 And how’s the sky ? Will morning be the husk  
 Of our desire, or passionate, frosty-keen,  
 To shake us out of death and wash us clean ?

CHRISTOPHER HASSALL

THE ONLY PRETTY RINGTIME

Stern Lover in your helm of steel,  
 What dreadful tryst is this you keep ?  
 The birds in heav’n now drone of death . . .  
 A lover must still hold his breath,  
 Nor lose the power to think and feel.

For love no longer swoons on sleep,  
 But wide-eyed waits, forsown to save :  
 Now any time hell’s din may start,  
 And shot and shell make great the heart,  
 While fires of death more fiercely leap !

Still, still victorious o’er the grave  
 Shall walk the lover and his lass,  
 Spring strow her flowers with healing hands  
 Above the hurt and haggard lands,  
 And blunt the blades with sheaves of grass.

A. V. BOWEN

## THE INVADER

Our shops and farms wide open lie ;  
Still the invader feels a lack :  
Disquiet whets his gluttony  
For what he may not carry back.

He prowls about in search of wealth  
But has no skill to recognize  
Our things of worth : we need no stealth  
To mask them from his pauper eyes.

He calls for worship and amaze ;  
We give him yes-men in a row,  
Reverberating that self-praise  
He wearied of a while ago.

He casts around for some new whim,  
Something preposterously more :  
'Love me' he bids. We offer him  
The slack embraces of a whore.

And when he spitefully makes shift  
To share with us his pauperdom,  
By forcing on us as a gift  
The shoddy wares he brought from home,

And watches that we sell and buy  
Amongst us his degrading trash,  
He gets no gain at all. Though sly  
With what he knows, the guns and cash,

What he knows not he may not touch ;  
Those very spoils for which he came  
Are still elusive to his clutch—  
They swerve and scorch him like a flame.

Invader-outcast of all lands,  
He lives condemned to gorge and crave,  
To foul his feast with his own hands :  
At once the oppressor and the slave.

## STREET SONG

‘ Love my heart for an hour, but my bone for a day—  
 At least the skeleton smiles, for it has a morrow :  
 But the hearts of the young are now the dark treasure of  
 Death,  
 And summer is lonely.

‘ Comfort the lonely light and the sun in its sorrow,  
 Come like the night, for terrible is the sun  
 As truth, and the dying light shows only the skeleton’s hunger  
 For peace, under the flesh like the summer rose.

‘ Come through the darkness of death, as once through the  
 branches  
 Of youth you came, through the shade like the flowering door  
 That leads into Paradise, far from the street,—you, the unborn  
 City seen by the homeless, the night of the poor.

‘ You walk in the city ways, where Man’s threatening shadow,  
 Red-edged by the sun like Cain, has a changing shape—  
 Elegant like the Skeleton, crouched like the Tiger,  
 With the age-old wisdom and aptness of the Ape.

‘ The pulse that beats in the heart is changed to the hammer  
 That sounds in the Potter’s Field where they build a new  
 world  
 From our Bone, and the carrion-bird days’ foul droppings  
 and clamour—  
 But you are my night, and my peace,—

‘ The holy night of conception, of rest, the consoling  
 Darkness when all men are equal,—the wrong and the right,  
 And the rich and the poor are no longer separate nations,—  
 They are brothers in night.’

This was the song I heard ; but the Bone is silent !  
 Who knows if the sound was that of the dead light calling,—  
 Of Cæsar rolling onward his heart, that stone,  
 Or the burden of Atlas falling.

EDITH SITWELL

## CRUCIFORM

Here, in the sand, where some one laid him down,  
The one known human signature is clear.  
Whether woman or man, white-skinned or brown,  
Whether the outflung arms were so for fear  
Or agony or weariness or shame,  
Here, in one line athwart another line,  
Is briefly written the one, mutual name,  
A saviour's, or a thief's, or yours, or mine.  
Dunes sifted undersea long since have borne  
This self-same cross, small and anonymous ;  
Tan deserts, that the wind has not yet worn,  
Will print the symbol. And not one of us,  
But then, or some day, could lie down and fit  
Our desolate arms and bodies into it.

WINIFRED WELLES

## TEARS

Temper, blood and speech divide  
The nations jangling side by side ;  
Nor can one close-bordering land  
The other's laughter understand.

Yet have all the sons of Earth  
One thing common from their birth ;  
Stands alone through changing years  
The catholicity of tears :

Whose eloquence at last may teach  
And reconcile them each to each.

GEORGE ROSTREVOR HAMILTON

## ECLOGUE

When all the powers have fallen  
It will be late in autumn  
And lovers then will wander  
Between still trees and water,  
Between the leaves' swoon  
And the mirrored swan.  
They will no more be startled  
When all the guns have hurtled  
Down precipice and panic,  
But will put on the tunic  
Of beauty and secureness  
Knowing that no recurrence  
Of the inherited hate  
Will glaze their eyes with heat.  
Grief was clean gone  
Never to grow again  
When she whose mortal sickness  
Worsened with all physicians  
Of love's garment laid hold  
And by the hem was healed.  
O thrice and four times blessed  
Above the pitch of guessing  
Who in the changed future  
Will sense the cure of nature  
And know their kind delivered  
From the issue of blood forever.

O that my eyes and yours  
Before the drift of years  
Defeat us in the tomb  
Might see that lightsome time :  
When shattered lies the piston  
Rivet and rod unfastened,  
Belt crank and lever broken,  
Flywheel rusted in bracken.  
Then would we walk and suffer  
Bramble and brake to cover  
Ruins of embassies  
And splintered balconies,

See pools in sunlight gem  
The roofless robing room,  
Moonlight and ivy stencil  
The place of the council.

We would not think, though hungry,  
That rain and storm were angry  
But would rejoice to endure  
With the wild hare and deer  
Frost whirlwind fire and lightning ;  
And with the light latening  
Our eyes would not be poor  
Seeing the hours repair  
With leaf and arrayed blossom,  
As with a proved balsam,  
The surgery of winter.  
O then in peace would enter  
Spring and highest summer,  
Not in pride and armour.

HAL SUMMERS

## THE TROPHY

The wise king dowered with blessings on his throne,  
The rebel raising the flag in the market place,  
Haunt me like figures on an ancient stone  
The ponderous light of history beats upon,  
Or the enigma of a single face  
Handed unguessed, unread from father to son,  
As if it dreamed within itself alone.

Regent and rebel clash in horror and blood  
Here on the blindfold battlefield. But there,  
Motionless in the grove of evil and good  
They grow together and their roots are twined  
In deep confederacy far from the air,  
Sharing the secret trophy each with other ;  
And king and rebel are like brother and brother,  
Or father and son, co-princes of one mind,  
Irreconcilables, their treaty signed.

EDWIN MUIR

## SOWING SEED

As my hand dropt a seed  
In the dibbled mould  
And my mind hurried onward  
To picture the miracle  
June should unfold,

On a sudden before me  
Hanging its head  
With black petals  
Rotting and tainted  
Stood a flower, dead;

As if all the world's hope  
Were rotting there,  
A thing to weep for,  
Ripe for burial,  
Veined with despair.

Yet I cannot prevent  
My ignorant heart  
From trust that is deeper  
Than fear can fathom  
Or hope desert.

The small twy-bladed  
Shoot will thrust  
To brave all hazards.  
The seed is sown  
And in Earth I trust.

LAURENCE BINYON

## HISTORY

Time has stored all, but keeps his chronicle  
 In secret, beyond all our probe or gauge.  
 There flows the human story, vast and full ;  
 And here a muddy trickle smears the page.

The things our hearts remember make a sound  
 So faint ; so loud the menace and applause.  
 The gleaners come, with eyes upon the ground  
 After Oblivion's harvest, picking straws.

What is man, if this only has told his tale,  
 For whom ruin and blunder mark the years,  
 Whom continent-shadowing conquerors regale  
 To surfeiting, with glory of blood and tears ?

He flaunts his folly and woe in a proud dress :  
 But writes no history of his happiness.

LAURENCE BINYON

## SO STILL THE WORLD

(from '*Winter Solstice*')

So still the world this winter noon,  
 So sparkling-cold and still,  
 Of quietness the heart  
 Could take her fill.

Upon the shallow snow  
 Clear rang my careful tread.  
 Summer had died, long ago,  
 But was not dead,

While from the lattice thorn,  
 To chide my lingering doubt,  
 Lively with faith and fear  
 A feathered eye looked out,

And on the powdered verge,  
Where road gives way to grass  
For others' coming and going,  
Many a printing was

Of blackbird, of wren :  
Who burn away their blood,  
Even as we,  
To ends not understood.

So rare the fallen fleece of sky,  
So far the noise of men,  
Myself for a musing moment  
Was blackbird, was wren.

GERALD BULLETT

#### SLEEP

The ring and rim  
Of tidal sleep  
Will slip and creep  
Along my limbs

And I shall watch,  
But never catch  
The final change,  
The water-plunge,

And through what caves  
Beneath what waves  
I then shall go  
I shall not know,

For I shall come  
From that lost land  
Half-blind, half-dumb,  
With, in my hand,

A fish's head,  
A shell, a shred  
Of seaweed and  
Some grains of sand.

A. S. J. TESSIMOND

## COUNTRY LIFE

The troubled man turned head away ;  
    Heedless, he saw the river gliding,  
The reeds of sword-steel, and the grey  
    Reflected clouds fast riding ;  
He saw the foam, the water's colour,  
    The whirlpools dwindling as they ran,  
A leaf, a fly, a spinning bubble—  
    He did not see a troubled man.

For this, a moment in an age,  
    He paid no price, and gave no thought ;  
He ceased his spirit's weary search  
    And took that instant all he sought.

FRANK KENDON

## THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT

I am the unnoticed, the unnoticeable man :  
The man who sat on your right in the morning train :  
The man you looked through like a windowpane :  
The man who was the colour of the carriage, the colour of  
    the mounting  
Morning pipe-smoke.

I am the man too busy with a living to live,  
Too hurried and worried to see and smell and touch :  
The man who is patient too long and obeys too much  
And wishes too softly and seldom.

I am the man they call the nation's backbone,  
Who am boneless—playable catgut, pliable clay :  
The Man they label Little lest one day  
I dare to grow.

I am the rails on which the moment passes,  
 The megaphone for many words and voices :  
 I am graph, diagram,  
 Composite face.

I am the led, the easily-fed,  
 The tool, the not-quite-fool,  
 The would-be-safe-and-sound,  
 The uncomplaining, bound,  
 The dust fine-ground,  
 Stone-for-a-statue waveworn pebble-round.

A. S. J. TESSIMOND

#### HOUND VOICE

Because we love bare hills and stunted trees  
 And were the last to choose the settled ground,  
 Its boredom of the desk or of the spade, because  
 So many years companioned by a hound,  
 Our voices carry ; and though slumber-bound,  
 Some few half wake and half renew their choice,  
 Give tongue, proclaim their hidden name—‘ Hound Voice.’

The women that I picked spoke sweet and low  
 And yet gave tongue. ‘ Hound Voices ’ were they all.  
 We picked each other from afar and knew  
 What hour of terror comes to test the soul,  
 And in that terror’s name obeyed the call,  
 And understood, what none have understood,  
 Those images that waken in the blood.

Some day we shall get up before the dawn  
 And find our ancient hounds before the door,  
 And wide awake know that the hunt is on ;  
 Stumbling upon the blood-dark track once more,  
 Then stumbling to the kill beside the shore ;  
 Then cleaning out and bandaging of wounds,  
 And chants of victory amid the encircling hounds.

W. B. YEATS

## SPRING NIGHT

Spring night, the owls crying  
From copse to copse and the dew rising.

Then wonderful the empty field and waiting  
For another people to be returning  
From the dark rain and the jealous forest  
Into their rest.

Still be that pathless place of comfort  
And fair the flowering they sought :  
Even the long-eared grasses in compassion  
Ceasing their talk of scythe and resurrection.

Wise be the woods, and every pale-throated  
Primrose at peace, you undevoted :  
Cunning the river as your subtle thoughts  
Turning a stone to blue or black-eyed quartz.

Unmoved the leaf, light lie the soil about  
The fierce endeavour of the root :  
Come not with your unquiet voice  
Bidding the solitude rejoice.

Never so quiet be eye and grief  
Though bone its panacea receive  
Blood calls to blood and humours wrap  
The tortuous runway of the sap.

O leave us, you lover, cease telling  
Of sorrow past our healing :  
Sleep and cease crying, you wounded  
Against the undefended.

Spring night, plovers calling  
Over the fallow and the dew falling.

## THE BIRD

Adventurous bird walking upon the air,  
 Like a schoolboy running and loitering, leaping and springing,  
 Pensively pausing, suddenly changing your mind  
 To turn at ease on the heel of a wing-tip. Where  
 In all the crystalline world was there to find  
 For your so delicate walking and airy winging  
 A floor so perfect, so firm and so fair,  
 And where a ceiling and walls so sweetly ringing  
 Whenever you sing, to your clear singing ?

The wide-winged soul itself can ask no more  
 Than such pure, resilient and endless floor  
 For its strong-pinioned plunging and soaring and upward  
 and upward springing.

EDWIN MUIR

## THE FOX

First lambs have come, late snowfall to the hill.  
 All day he watches, feeding on greed  
 till, stars in the April sky, he steals  
 shadowy down the valleyside, furtive wades  
 marsh myrtle and by screen of heather comes  
 where flocks graze. Trembling for quarry  
 he scans each plucking lamb, chooses, pauses  
 strong as a spell, then flashes to revelry.

The lambless ewe sputters down the slope.  
 Home over Bristly Ridge in one sweep  
 he covers the Glyders, then deviously to his deep  
 mountain den, safe down creviced drop  
 where no terrier dares.

On his morning round  
 death in wool embers is the shepherd's find.

IAN SERRAILLIER

## EPITHALAMION

Wind in the street, and sadness of unknown walkers  
in a world shut-out ; infinite sadness of men  
not, this night, one and quiet with my love :  
look down, stars, you illimitable and glorious wakers,  
on her delight that wakes from silks ; her, the young moon,  
her bright body stepping to me, perfect, unaloof,  
moving in life ;  
rising with no shame, towards Endymion.

Oh swift lights that sweep through your proud abysses,  
and stretch your power along the infinitesimal days of man,  
this shall escape you, this you shall not dissolve.  
Have we not checked you, winging wind, stars in your  
courses,  
bound you in a twilight of all times, made our demesne  
in the still courts of the chimera, silenced moment and self ?  
together, the gulf  
walled-in, body and life made one ?

Life in life, spirit in spirit, as the earth moves  
for ever gently in the swaying of night's harness,  
one peace ; as now earth rests, and all the  
ships have untroubled ways in their white grooves,  
and waters go among them on caressing journeys ;  
and our imprisoned prophecy steals wide and free  
as the pouring pools of the sea,  
strong indissoluble wonder of deep clearness ?

No future, no fear now, in this hushed house stirring ;  
only our breaths bound, linked the circle of our years,  
and the past rising present against sleep.  
I have taken the world in a small room, oh high staring  
night, our flesh made perfect ; mine to be ours.  
And the strong promise lays its head upon my lap :  
him will I keep,  
Here in the burning of our mutual fires.

And the fires burn down ; faces return from glass ;  
 we are not waking, dead, sleeping : we are still,  
 in timelessness, the flower shaken from the bough.  
 And shadows move in the deep breath of weariness ;  
 in peace, unknowing, endeavour turns to the wall.  
 And the wheel's quietness is promise. Now  
 we murmuring only know  
 the immemorial splendour of the wheel.

TERENCE TILLER

## THE ATOLL IN THE MIND

Out of what calms and pools the cool shell grows  
 dumb teeth under clear waters, where no currents  
 fracture the coral's porous horn

Grows up the mind's stone tree, the honeycomb,  
 the plump brain coral breaking the pool's mirror,  
 the ebony antler, the cold sugared fan.

All these strange trees stand upward through the water,  
 the mind's grey candied points tend to the surface,  
 the greater part is out of sight below.

But when on the island's whaleback spring green blades,  
 new land over water wavers, birds bring seeds  
 and tides plant slender trunks by the lagoon

I find the image of the mind's two trees, cast downward,  
 one tilting leaves to catch the sun's bright pennies,  
 one dark as water rooted among the bones.

ALEX COMFORT

## LACHRYMÆ

Slow are the years of light :

and more immense  
Than the imagination. And the years return  
Until the Unity is filled. And heavy are  
The lengths of Time with the slow weight of tears.  
Since Thou didst weep, on a remote hillside  
Beneath the olive trees, fires of unnumbered stars  
Have burnt the years away, until we see them now :  
Since Thou didst weep, as many tears  
Have flowed like hourglass sand.

Thy tears were all.

And when our secret face  
Is blind because of the mysterious  
Surging of tears wrung by our most profound  
Presentiment of evil in man's fate, our cruellest wounds  
Become Thy stigmata. They are Thy tears which fall.

DAVID GASCOYNE

## NOTHING IS ENOUGH

Nothing is enough !  
No, though our all be spent—  
Heart's extremest love,  
Spirit's whole intent,  
All that nerve can feel,  
All that brain invent,—  
Still beyond appeal  
Will Divine Desire  
Yet more excellent  
Precious cost require  
Of this mortal stuff,—  
Never be content  
Till ourselves be fire,  
Nothing is enough !

LAURENCE BINYON

## THE THREE STARS OF PROPHECY

The night was Time :  
 The phases of the moon,  
 Dynamic influence, controller of the tides,  
 The changing face and cycle of quick shades,  
 Were History, which seemed unending. Then  
 Occurred the prophesied and the to be  
 Recounted hour when the reflection ceased  
 To flow like unseen life-blood in between  
 The night's tenebral mirror and the lunar light,  
 Exchanging meaning. Anguish like a crack  
 Ran with its ruin from the fulfilled Past  
 Towards the Future's emptiness ; and *black*,  
 Invading all the prism, became absolute.

Black was the No-time at the heart  
 Of Time (the frameless mirror's back),  
 But still the Anguish shook  
 As though with memory and with anticipation : till  
 Its terror's trembling broke  
 By an unhoped-for miracle Negation's spell :  
 Death died and Birth was born with one great cry  
 And out of some uncharted spaceless sky  
 Into the new-born night three white stars fell.

And were suspended there a while for all  
 To see and understand (though none may tell  
 The inmost meaning of this Mystery).  
 The first star has a name which stands  
 For many names of all things that begin  
 And all first thoughts of undivided minds ;  
 The second star  
 Is nameless and shines bleakly like the pain  
 Of an existence conscious only of its end,  
 And inarticulate, alone  
 And blind. Immeasurably far  
 Each from the other first and second spin ;  
 Yet to us at this moment they appear

So close to one another that their rays  
 In one blurred conflagration intertwine ;  
 So that the third seems born  
 Of their embracing : till the outer pair  
 Are separate seen again  
 Fixed in their true extremes ; and in between  
 These two gleams' hemispheres, unseen  
 But shining everywhere,  
 The third star balanced shall henceforward burn  
 Through all dark still to come, serene,  
 Ubiquitous, immaculately clear ;  
 A magnet in the middle of the maze, to draw us on  
 Towards that Bethlehem beyond despair  
 Where from the womb of Nothing shall be born  
 A Son.

DAVID GASCOYNE

## HOC EST CORPUS

I who am nothing and this tissue  
 steer, find in my servant still my maker,  
 rule and obey, as flame to candle mated :  
 whom bone has conjured, Banquo shall the Bard  
 command, the marble rule Pygmalion.  
 Did this tower build me then who am its garrison ?

Strange that in me the shadow  
 moving the substance speaks : strange that such air  
 pulls the blue sinew, whom the blood maintains,  
 whom the heart's coming slight defection  
 shall spill, speaks now and holds  
 time like a permanent stone, its cold weight judging.

ALEX COMFORT

## PIETA

Stark in the pasture on the skull-shaped hill,  
 In swollen aura of disaster shrunken and  
 Unsheltered by the ruin of the sky,  
 Intensely concentrated in themselves the banded  
 Saints abandoned kneel.

And under the unburdened tree  
 Great in their midst, the rigid folds  
 Of a blue cloak upholding as a text  
 Her grief-scrawled face for the ensuing world to read,  
 The Mother, whose dead Son's dear head  
 Weighs like a precious blood-encrusted stone  
 On her unfathomable breast :  
 Holds Him God has forsaken, Word made flesh  
 Made ransom, to the slow smoulder of her heart  
 Till the catharsis of the race shall be complete.

DAVID GASCOYNE

## POEM

The grecian tulip and the gothic rose  
 flower to deceive us ; limbs age with fruits ;  
 the man who marks the boneyard with a cross  
 reaps poppies ; human flesh plucks down the roots  
 of the barley. The greyhound with the kind  
 sensitive head and the soft eyes, goes blind  
 or mad ; dies. The wind means all it cries.  
 Love, it is time we listened to that wind.

Who cranes an arm to wait for the white body,  
 death, polishing old philosophies,  
 gives the grave scarves woven of our beauty.  
 Beasts are passive as growing rings of trees ;  
 perfected process lacking hope or thought,  
 tulip-limbs, or the white rose in the throat.  
 To die as those die, live as the lion knows  
 —love, it is time we found that secret out.

TERENCE TILLER

## THE CRYSTAL

With burning fervour  
I am forever  
Turning in my hand  
The crystal, this moment

Whose spatial glitter  
Travelling erratically  
Forward

Touches with permanent  
Disturbance the pavements  
The faked walls the crevices  
Of futurity.

Sooner than darken  
This crystal miracle  
With a hand's  
Vagary

One would dissever  
This wrist this hand,  
Or remove the eyelid  
To see the end.

GEORGE BARKER

## THE BURNING OF THE LEAVES

Now is the time for the burning of the leaves.  
 They go to the fire ; the nostril pricks with smoke  
 Wandering slowly into the weeping mist.  
 Brittle and blotched, ragged and rotten sheaves !  
 A flame seizes the smouldering ruin, and bites  
 On stubborn stalks that crackle as they resist.

The last hollyhock's fallen tower is dust :  
 All the spices of June are a bitter reek,  
 All the extravagant riches spent and mean.  
 All burns ! the reddest rose is a ghost.  
 Sparks whirl up, to expire in the mist : the wild  
 Fingers of fire are making corruption clean.

Now is the time for stripping the spirit bare,  
 Time for the burning of days ended and done,  
 Idle solace of things that have gone before.  
 Rootless hope and fruitless desire are there :  
 Let them go to the fire with never a look behind.  
 The world that was ours is a world that is ours no more.

They will come again, the leaf and the flower, to arise  
 From squalor of rottenness into the old splendour,  
 And magical scents to a wondering memory bring ;  
 The same glory, to shine upon different eyes.  
 Earth cares for her own ruins, naught for ours.  
 Nothing is certain, only the certain spring.

LAURENCE BINYON

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